# THE LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES: A THEORETICAL ANALYSIS OF THE REASONS FOR ITS EMERGENCE AND FAILURE

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**Abstract**

The study aimed to identify the impact of the objective reasons, conditions of the establishment of the League of Arab States on its role and performance in the Arab regional system, by studying the objective reasons and analyzing the conditions of its emergence, studying possible scenarios and proposals for reforming the League of Arab States, and studying the causes of failure and poor performance. To achieve these objectives, the analytical descriptive approach was relied upon. The study revealed that the emergence of the League of Arab States was not really a step towards unity as much as it was a counter-project to the heroes of partial unitary projects, and about the reasons for the failure of the League of Arab States performance evidenced in preventing the American occupation of Iraq in 2003, the successive Palestinian crises, and the Arab revolutions of 2011 that the study concluded that it loses the minimum number of decisions and the ability to coordinate between its members, as evidenced by the failure in many Religious, sectarian, ethnic or the necessities of the required harmony between social segments.

**Keywords:** League of Arab States, Conditions of Origination, Performance.

## INTRODUCTION

The Arab League differs from other organizations with regard to the conditions of the international environment. The Arab League has emerged into existence and carries with it three contradictions: national thought, sharp intervention from the international environment, diagonal logic and national sovereignty. Therefore, the Arab League is a regional organization that has been subjected since its inception to three types of wills; the will of national thought, the will of member countries, and the wills of the international environment. These are all determinants imposed by major countries that have vital and strategic interests in the Arab region (Dakhlallah, 2012).

In order to maintain Arab balances and alliances. Where it arose in light of the transformation of the international system from a multipolar system to a bipolar system, and at a time when France and Britain were trying to maintain some influence in the region, but the United States of America was quick to reject this project on political grounds and under external pressure and the adherence of Arab governments to the principle of sovereignty, a pact was drawn up that does not rise to the level of awareness The nationalist who dominated the educated sectors of public opinion at the time. This made a crisis of trust between the Arab peoples and the League of Arab States (Sadrati, 2016).

After the departure of colonialism, the United States of America took control of the region, Israel was active and used the communist threat to the region to divide Arab countries (Mahaftha, 1992). Just thinking about the performance of the League of Arab States in the Arab regional system leads us to question the objective reasons for the establishment of this entity,

the circumstances of the establishment, the absence of the security role and the cooperative role of it, which is considered one of the main roles of any international regional organization.

## Statement of Purpose

The problem of the study lies in identifying the impact of the objective reasons, conditions and data of the emergence of the League of Arab States on its role and performance in the Arab regional system.

## Objectives of the study

This study seeks to achieve a set of objectives:

- Studying the objective reasons and analyzing the conditions of establishment of League of Arab States.
- Studying possible scenarios and proposals to reform the League of Arab States.
- Studying the causes of failure and poor performance of League of Arab States.

## Hypothesis of the study

The failure performance of the League of Arab States is based on the existence of a correlation between the Charter of this Organization and the political wills of Member States in the application and implementation of this Charter."

## Questions of the Study

This study seeks to answer a set of questions:

- What are the real reasons behind the establishment of the Arab League states?
- What are the reasons that led to the failure of the Arab League as a regional organization?
- What are the expected scenarios of the Arab League states performance?

## Significance of the study

The importance of the study lies in analyzing the circumstances and data of the Arab League and analyzing the reasons that led to its poor performance as a regional organization that brings together Arab countries under its umbrella.

## METHODOLOGY

The analytical descriptive approach in this study will be based on by studying the phenomenon as it actually is and knowing its characteristics and the most prominent problems in the reality of application.

## Study structure

The study will be divided into two main axes:

The first axis will discuss the circumstances and data of the emergence of the Arab League, as for the second axis, the reasons for failure and the expected scenarios.

**First axis: the circumstances of the establishment of the League of Arab States**

The League of Arab States was formed at the end of the 1940s before the end of the Second World War and before the formation of the European Union. Britain, which has influence in the region, had the role in recommending the formation of an Arab Union to be one of its national arms in the region and to serve its strategic interests (Al-Hajji, 2010).

This league is a coordination structure between countries and entities separate from each other and different in systems of government and different from each other in their alliances in the international system, which arose after the Second World War with a bilateral polarity. Since the beginning, it did not play any role in formulating the internal components of any of the member states with the aim of forming close governance systems, economic programs, nor similar educational or cultural strategies (Al-Dihi, Abdul Rasol, 2018).

The Arab League includes Arab countries in both Asia and Africa. Its charter provides for coordination among member states in economic affairs, including commercial relations, communications, cultural relations, nationalities, travel documents and permits, social relations and health. The permanent headquarters of the Arab League is located in Cairo, the capital of Egypt (Tunisia from 1979-1990 (Ahmed, 2000). The total area of the Arab League states member states is 13,953,041 km, as the total area of the Arab world makes its second in the world after Russia and its total population is the fourth in the world after China, India and the European Union. The total Arab population in 2021 in the Arab world is about 437,812,546 people, representing 5.5% of the world's population of 7,956,486,115 people (Borieng, 2014).

The Arab League facilitates the conduct of political, economic, cultural, scientific and social programs to develop the interests of the Arab world through institutions such as the Arab Organization for Education, Culture and Science (ALESCO) and the Council of Arab Economic Unity (Al-haj, 2010). The Arab League has served as a forum to coordinate the political positions of member states, to deliberate and discuss issues of common importance, and to settle some Arab disputes and reduce their conflicts, such as the conflict of the Lebanon crisis in 1958. The Arab League also represented a platform for drafting and concluding many historical documents to promote economic integration among it' members. One example of such important documents is the document of joint Arab economic action, which sets out the principles of economic activities in the region.

Each member state has one vote on the Council of the League, but the resolutions only bind the states that voted for these resolutions. The goals of the Arab League in 1945 were (Al-Dihi, Abdul Rasol, 2018):

- Strengthening and coordinating in the political, cultural, economic and social programs of its members.

- Mediate the resolution of disputes that arise between its states, or disputes between their states and third parties.

- States that signed the Joint Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement on April 13, 1950 are obliged to coordinate military defense measures.

It is necessary to talk about how the Arab League was established. Before, during and after the Second World War, the Arab liberation movements had emerged on the Arab scene, making the national feeling the appropriate environment for its revolutionary movement. The war was the occasion that supported the Arab liberation movement and the war showed the strategic importance of the Arab region. These movements found an opportunity to demand to get rid of European control. Arab people began to think of gathering their ranks to demand their rights. This made Britain consider it necessary to study the issue of the Arab Union and a deeper study by the representatives of the relevant ministries in Britain and its representatives in the region (Arab Public Opinion Scale Survey, 2008).

The official committee of the Middle East discussed the various formulas that the Arab Union may take and indicate their benefits, harms and possibilities of applying them, provided that they include a solution to the Palestinian issue, as the opinion of the representative of Britain in Cairo, Baghdad, Beirut and Jerusalem was that it was impossible to implement any Arab union and that the British government should not take any step in this direction (Alhaj, 2010).

At the meeting of the official committee of the Middle East on October 8, 1941, it became clear that every Arab federal project is acceptable, but if it guarantees the insurance of the British need for oil and the safety of British transportation and excludes any hostile countries from the region, it was agreed on the need to issue an official British statement that supports the idea of the Arab Union. This report included the pros and cons of this project (Al-Bayati, 1999).

One of the positives included in the report is to increase Britain's influence in the Arab world and solve the Palestinian problem to the satisfaction of Arabs and Jews. The negatives are the unwillingness of the Arab public opinion of the Union because it calls for sacrifices in local interests to account for national interests, which may provoke hostility between ruling families and religious and sectarian discord (Al-Jasour, 2001). Their report concluded that it was not time for an Arab political union and that it was better for Britain to study the future of its Arab policy. And it had suggestions, including the Fertile Crescent Country Unit, as well as the Levantine Country Unit project. But these unions were in accordance with the interests of Arab-British relations, ignoring the national aspirations of the Arabs towards unity.

Three trends emerged in the preliminary consultation period (Hatti, 1983):

- The first trend calls for the great unity of Syria led by Prince Abdullah bin Al Hussein.
- The second trend calls for the establishment of a unified state that includes the countries of the Fertile Crescent led by Iraq.
- The third trend calls for more general and comprehensive unit that includes Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Yemen in addition to the countries of the Fertile Crescent.

They disagreed about the form of the federation being federal or confederation and these consultations ended in 1944 (Youssef & Ali, 2013). It was announced on February 24, 1943 that it supports every movement established by the Arabs for the purpose of supporting their political, economic, social and cultural unity, and therefore the independent countries at the time, namely Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Jordan and Yemen, took the initiative

to conduct a series of measures to establish the Union. The Preparatory Committee formed by these countries and The foundations upon which the League of Arab States is based were laid down in a protocol known as the Alexandria Protocol, which was signed on October 7, 1944 (Saaf,2004).

After World War II and the victory of the Allies, whose armies controlled the entire Arab world after the defeat of the Axis forces, the Allies sought to re-shapt the world at the conferences of Tehran, Yalta and Casablanca. The accepted international formula to cover areas of influence was for regional organizations to be established under the umbrella of the United Nations and cooperate with it to maintain international peace and security (Abdel Moneim, 1985).

At that time, the Arab public opinion of his zades, newspapers and organizations was pushing for a real Arab unity. In 1944, Mustafa Al-Nahhas, Prime Minister of Egypt, invited the Arab governments that participated in the preliminary consultations to send their delegates to participate in the preparatory committee for the General Arab Conference, which will formulate projects to achieve Arab unity.

The committee was held in Alexandria in the presence of representatives of the participating countries and held eight consecutive sessions that excluded the establishment of a central government and the projects of Greater Syria and the Fertile Crescent, and was limited to the proposal to form a federal council with an executive authority whose decisions are implemented only by the countries that approve it (Abdel Moneim, 1985).

After the discussions, it turned out that Egypt has an integrated idea of the Arab League, moving in their forms towards establishing a regional organization based on cooperation and coordination, not on the basis of commitment to an Arab national political line(Al-Rashidi,1981).

There was controversy about the word of the League for a long time; Syria proposed the name of "Arab Alliance", while Iraq wanted the name of "Arab Union", but the Egyptian delegation saw that the name "Arab League" it presented was more linguistically and politically appropriate and compatible with the goals of the Arab countries, and in the end everyone agreed to this name after they revised it from The Arab delegates who attended the meetings of the Preparatory Committee for the General Arab Conference in Alexandria issued a protocol known as the Alexandria Protocol stipulating their approval of the establishment of a League of Arab States. In the end, it was agreed that the Charter of the Arab League would include the following (Rabah, 2012):

- Recognition of the sovereignty and independence of member states and their already existing borders.

- Recognition of equality between completeness between member states large and small.

- Recognition of each country of the right to conclude treaties and agreements with other non-Arab countries, provided that they do not conflict with the provisions of the Charter of the Arab League.

- There is no clear obligation to pursue a unified foreign policy.

- Not to resort to force to resolve disputes and disagreements that may arise between member states, including the imposition of economic restrictions or the mobilization of armies on borders.

- The Council of the League mediates between the member states and at their request, and Yemen and Saudi Arabia have reserved political cooperation between Arab countries.

There was a Differences of opinion on the phrase "It is not permissible in any case to follow a foreign policy that harms the policy of the League of Arab States." In fact, the Alexandria Protocol was just a statement of the principles on which the League of Arab States will be based and an explicit expression of the minimum level of political, economic, social and cultural cooperation that all Arab countries of different political systems and directions to accept it.

On March 22, 1945, the Arab countries met at the General Arab Conference to consider the draft Charter of the League of Arab States, which was prepared by the Preparatory Committee, and unanimously approved, after which ratification, and the Charter became effective on May 11, 1945 (Abdel Moneim, 1986).

The Charter was an honest picture of the official Arab reality at the end of World War II and therefore it was limited to satisfying the aspirations of the masses and their aspirations for Arab unity. The satisfaction of Britain, which saw the establishment of the Arab League as a service to its interests in the Arab region. Britain expected this League of Arab States to take responsibility for finding a solution to the Palestinian issue in cooperation with it. And she saw her as a bowl in which Arab national shipments were emptied (Al-Jasour, 2001). It is considered as a safety valve to confine Arab national wishes and wanted the Arab League to be a tool to frustte any unified Arab action that serves Arab interests or threatens British interests.

Although it is a first step towards Arab unity from the point of view of Arab nationalists, it was only an alternative to the state of chaos and lack of coordination between their countries before its establishment, as its establishment did not eliminate differences between member states, but rather became a platform for expressing Arab grievances and disagreements (Abdul Karim, 2018).

If we want to analyze beyond the apparent causes of the Arab League and ask who took the initiative to call on the Arab presidents to discuss the issue of the proposed unity?

The researcher believes that Mustafa Al-Nahhas, Prime Minister of Egypt, with a license from Britain, took over the invitation and chose Egypt because it is the largest Arab country ally of Britain and has a strong relationship with all Arab countries and has a political and military weight. It is clear to us that it was not really a step towards unity as much as it was a counter-project to invalidate partial unitary projects.

**Second axis: Causes of failure and expected scenarios**

The Charter of the Arab League approved the possibility of dismissal of any member who did not implement the membership obligations specified by the Charter and stipulated this unanimously by the majority of members, but it did not close the door completely before the dismissed state and has the right to apply again for new membership. Membership is also lost

by the demise of international legal personality for any reason such as integration into another country, and this happened during the unity between Egypt and Syria in February 1958 after they became the United Arab Republic, as well as after the union between North and South Yemen in 1990 and the establishment of the United Arab Republic of Yemen (Rabah, 2012).

As for the state's loss of sovereignty under duress, as happened after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, it did not affect Kuwait's continued membership in the League of Arab States. Egypt's membership was also suspended in 1979 after it signed a peace treaty with Israel, and the League of Arab States's headquarters was transferred from Cairo to Tunisia, but the Arab countries restored diplomatic relations with Egypt in 1987 and Egypt was allowed to return to the League of Arab States in 1989, and the League of Arab States's headquarters were returned to Cairo again. Syria was suspended on November 16, 2011 following the outbreak of the Syrian Civil War. On March 6, 2013, the Arab League granted the Syrian National Coalition Syria's seat in the Arab League. On March 9, 2014, Secretary-General Nabil Elaraby stated that Syria's seat will remain vacant until the opposition completes the formation of its institutions. In 2021, the Arab League began a normalization process between Syria and other Arab countries. On May 7, 2023, at the meeting of the Council of the League of Arab States in Cairo, it was agreed to re-member Syria.

The presence of the League of Arab States in the Tunisian model was non-existent and no one thought about any kind of attendance for the Arab League in the Egyptian model. The presence in Egypt was more Gulf than Arab. As for the Yemeni model, it was the Arab-Gulf presence that matched the international model. The security incentive and the threats of Al-Qaeda in particular to avoid reaching the rest of the Arab Gulf countries through the beaches.

As for the Libyan model, the League of Arab states position remained surrounded by suspicions because it was limited only to providing cover to NATO and had no space of action or attendance after that. As for the most complex Syrian model, the Arab initiative has plied itself with the international initiative, which is a game of interests between major countries, so that the local parties are in the role of the tool only and not decisive or scheduled to fade its role in the crisis of dividing Sudan (Abdul Karim, 2018).

The questions raised remain as these components are borderline and hostile to each other and there are great differences in governance and wealth systems and their distribution, sects and minorities, their rights and privacy, and the pattern of relations at home and abroad need new philosophies, new mechanisms of work, and the search for a new contract and a new balance equation, especially (Rabah, 2012).

The researcher believes that the conditions of the starch and its data give indications of its failure before it begins for the following reasons:

- The increasing calls for the reform of the Arab League, all of which focused on structural reform and its institutions, and the League was the problem without thinking about the main source of the Arab regime's need, which is the reform of Arab-Arab relations.

- The cooperation of Arab governments with the League of Arab States and hindering the activation of their role and evading their obligations is a major reason for their limited effective role in strengthening Arab cooperation.

- It is also due to its structural characteristics based on not compromising the sovereignty of member states, and therefore any progress in the issue of development requires collective will and it has only been available in a few cases.

- Following a plan for countries to make local problems and considerations a priority over vital and fateful issues of interest to Arabs in the face of the West and their colonial plans.

- The tendency of caution and reservation.

- Adherence to full individual sovereignty.

- The principle of sovereignty is considered a basic rule in Arab collective and institutional work and taking the consensus rule, and that the agreed decisions are implemented in accordance with the constitutional rules and systems in force in each country, and that the institutions of Arab action do not have legal jurisdiction or actual influence to enable them to ensure that the commitment of Arab countries, even the decisions taken unanimously, 80% of the decisions taken Some of the decisions did not come into action

- The Arab League could not cancel the existing barriers from visas between member states and open the way for freedom of movement for people and money to encourage investment. This indicates that it failed politically and economically, it did not have any practical steps and did not unite the currency and was unable to connect the Arab world to a network of road and railways in addition to its inability to establish a common Arab market.

- It has not carried out political reforms, combating corruption and introducing the democratic principle in relation to rights and freedoms and dealing with events with double standards (Youssef & Ali,2013

- The Arab League countries are still working for their national interests and are making every effort to promote it.

- Since the establishment of the Economic Council on March 25, 1953, the League has encouraged the establishment of bodies, councils and federations based on the principle of specialization, but without legal and organizational foundations that codify and govern the relationship with each other and between it and the Arab League, this has led to the lack of coordination and the absence of any holistic and integrated vision of joint Arab action

- The conflicts and conflicts between the Arab member states were reflected on the opportunities of joint Arab action.

- The role of foreign intervention, which is not in its interest to joint Arab coordination.

Another evidence of the poor performance of the League of Arab States is the existence of many Arab disputes that the League failed or did not intervene in resolving, as represented by the following:

**1. Disputes that the League of Arab States did not intervene in resolving** (Sa'af, 2004)**:**

- The Lebanese-Iraqi conflict in 1956 over the distribution of the gains of transporting Iraqi oil by pipelines.

- The Syrian-Lebanese conflict of 1949 after one of the Syrian army patrols entered Lebanese territory and killed one of the Palestinians cooperating with Israel.

- Jordan and the Palestinian Resistance / September 1970.

**2. Disputes that the Arab League intervened, but without success in resolving and settling them** (Sadrati, 2016)**:**

- The Yemeni crisis in 1948 during the civil war, where its role was limited only to the fact-finding committee.

- The Egyptian-Sudanese dispute over border demarcation.

- Algerian-Moritanian-Moroccan dispute over Western Sahara.

**3. Disputes that effectively contributed to solving them** (Al-Rashidi, 1981)**:**

- The Kuwaiti-Iraqi conflict in 1961.

- The Lebanese civil war of 1975.

The Charter of the League of Arab States was limited to mentioning mediation as one diplomatic means that allows the Council of the League to intervene in stopping conflicts that can develop and lead to armed conflict or the outbreak of war between the conflicting parties. It did not mention any task or preventive function. Mediation is also non-binding and remains a friendly initiative in matters not related to the issue of the state's independence, territorial integrity, or sovereignty. Article Five of the Charter referred to arbitration as a judicial method, but it is optional (Al-Mwafi, 1979).

The deficit in it also reached its inability to protect the independence of its members, but the deficit reached its inability to clarify its position to the US administration opposing the war on Iraq and in order to overcome the situation began to develop joint Arab action through initiatives.

**More effective mechanisms for reforming the Arab League:**

It is possible to provide the Arab League with an Arab popular body in the form of an Arab parliament, for example, that can give it a new dynamic and enable it to overcome the stalemate in cases of sharp differences between member states.

Reforming the decision-making system and making decisions that have the approval of the majority binding on everyone and not limited to them only.

Introduce a system of denial to countries participating in the meetings from the right if they commit crimes against their peoples, support terrorism, or interfere in the affairs of the member states of the League of Arab States.

Unifying general principles of Arab economic policies by mutual consent. And working on an effective and binding mechanism to settle disputes and conflicts, developing the Arab Peace and Security Council and not ignoring it and giving it broad powers as one of the mechanisms to resolve outstanding Arab Arab differences and activate an Arab Court of Justice (Aouinat, 2013).

It is possible to continue and continue to suffer from the crisis of trust between member states. The talk is about rebuilding, reforming and developing the League of Arab States. This calls for focusing on its structural side and the required harmonization between the data of the Arab and international reality and focusing on the functional aspect. The starting point is the need to identify some areas that are not subject to the dispute between member states and the intensification of joint activity, which enhances finding common ground based on trust and encourages member states to expand the scope of work and reformulate inter-Arab relations (Al-Mawafi,1979).

It cannot remain in a state of stalemate and a formal role and cannot be abolished in an era in which economic and political blocs are increasing, and Arab countries alone cannot face challenges in political, economic, social and cultural affairs and remain isolated from the Arab world (Al-Bayati, 1999).

We conclude that there are three possibilities; as for the continuation or abolition of the current situation and the search for a more effective alternative with new tools and mechanisms that keep pace with the times and rapid international and regional developments or work to reform them.

## CONCLUSION

The League of Arab States failed to carry out its tasks and responsibilities towards the wishes of the Arab peoples to achieve political reform and get rid of authoritarian regimes due to the lack of a real desire of Arab leaders and the lack of laws in its charter oblige leaders to take explicit positions towards pivotal Arab issues. We conclude that we cannot yet present all these data for the reasons for emergence to link positively between the establishment of the League of Arab States and the development of nationalist thought among peoples, but rather to absorb the Arab national awareness that has increased and threatened the interests of new colonialism, and it falls within the strategy of "colonialism in securing its future interests. We see the country basis in the face of nationalism and this explains the practices and policies of member states and their alliance and association with foreign forces. The reality of the Arab countries in the 1940s is different from what it was in the fifties, sixties, seventies and eighties, where the absence of two full great powers was influential in the international world and the lack of accession of the Arab Maghreb to the agreement, almost all Arab countries did not gain their independence due to the emergence of oil and the absence of Israel

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