

Arab League: Notes for UPSC International Relations

The Arab League is a regional organisation of Arab states in the Middle East. Formal Name - Al-Jamia ad-Duwal al-Arabiya (Arabic) and it has its headquarters in Cairo, Egypt.

The League's main goal is to "draw closer the relations between member states and co-ordinate collaboration between them, to safeguard their independence and sovereignty, and to consider in a general way the affairs and interests of the Arab countries"

The Arab League is a topic featured often in the International relations segments of the [IAS Exam](#), as India has relations with the league. As such, candidates will find the details from this article to be of immense use.

Arab League Latest News

- After a 12-year suspension, Arab government delegates voted to reinstate Syria in the Arab League (2023).
 - Syria was expelled from the Arab League in 2011 as a result of President Bashar al-Assad's ruthless crackdown on pro-democracy protesters, which led to the country's continuing civil war.

Consequences of the recent development

- In accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 2254, the decision to allow Syria to return involves a commitment to ongoing talks with Arab states in order to progressively seek a political solution to the situation.
- The deadly earthquake in Turkey forced Western governments to remove or lessen sanctions placed on Syria.
- Another driving force in Syria's rehabilitation is the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between regional powerhouses Saudi Arabia and Iran, which was facilitated by China.
- Analysts think the easing of hostilities between Saudi Arabia and Iran has benefited Syria, which has relied on the former since the civil conflict began.

Origin and Development

The Arab League came into being after a Pact of the League was signed at Cairo on March 22, 1945 by the countries of Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Yemen that had achieved independence by then. The Pact was an initiative of the then Prime Minister of Egypt, Nahas Pasha, and was supported by the British government. The League was later joined by 14 other nations and the PLO. Palestine is considered independent *de jure*.

Objectives of the Arab League

The objectives of the League, as stated in Article 2 of the Pact, are to draw closer the relations between member-states and coordinate their political activities; safeguard their independence and sovereignty; promote the interests of the Arab countries; mediate in disputes between members or between members and a third party; promote cooperation in the matters relating to trade, customs, currency, agriculture, industry, communications including railways, roads, aviation, navigation, and posts and telegraphs, cultural matters and matters connected with nationality, passport, visas, execution of judgments and extradition, social welfare matters and health matters.

Arab League Members

Arab League has 22 member states - Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestinian Authority, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

Structure of the Arab League

The League consists of the Council, the Special Ministerial Committees, the General-Secretariat and the Specialised Agencies. The Council is the principal political organ, consisting of foreign ministers of all the member-countries. It meets twice a year to supervise the execution of agreements between the member-states, set guidelines for cooperation with other international organisations in the political, economic and social spheres, and mediate in disputes between members or a member and a country outside the League. Each member has one vote on the Council, and decisions are binding only on those states that have voted for them.

The Special Committees are attached to the Council. They draw up common policies for the regulation and advancement of cooperation in their respective fields (information, internal affairs, justice, housing, transport, social affairs, youth and sports, health environment telecommunications and electricity). The General-Secretariat is headed by a Secretary-General elected by the Council for a five-year term. It executes the decisions of the Council and is largely responsible for internal administration.

India and the Arab League

Being conferred observer status in 2007, India was the first member to enter the League although it does not have an Arab community, neither does it have an indigenous Arabic-speaking population.

Trade between India and Arab League members was valued at US\$30 billion in 2007. India's major exports to Arab League countries are chemicals, automobiles, machinery, foodstuff and other fast-moving products, while it is a large importer of Arab oil and gas. India also has a large diaspora in the Arab League countries of about 5 million, of which some 20% are professionals.

Oman and India enjoy particularly good relations, an example being; both countries exchange ship visits on a regular basis. Recently, Oman has granted India berthing rights for Indian naval ships. The Indian navy has also been training Omani naval forces for many years.

Frequently Asked Questions Related to Arab League

Q. What is the main purpose of the Arab League?

The League of Arab States (or Arab League) is a loose confederation of twenty-two Arab nations whose broad mission is to improve coordination among its members on matters of common interest.

Q. Why are countries like Turkey and Iran not part of the Arab League?

Due to long-standing political turmoils in the region, countries like Turkey and Iran are not part of the Arab League. Iran is largely hostile to Saudi Arabia while Turkey has expressed desires for observer status in the League, but has been refused for several political reasons. One of the reasons for refusals came from Iraq and Syria due to the Turkish Water Projects on the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, especially the Atatürk Dam.