Aboul Gheit's address before the Council of the League of Arab States at the Summit Level

17 May 2025

The address of Mr. Ahmed Aboul Gheit,

Secretary-General of the League of Arab States,

Before the Council of the League of Arab States at the Summit Level,

Thirty-Fourth Ordinary Session

Your Excellency Dr. Abdul Latif Rashid,

President of the Republic of Iraq,

Your Excellencies, Highnesses,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, allow me to express my profound appreciation and heartfelt gratitude to you, Mr. President, and through you to the dear people and government of the Republic of Iraq, for the generous hospitality, gracious care, and warm welcome extended to us. I would also like to extend my sincere congratulations on Iraq’s assumption of the presidency of this 34th session of the Arab Summit. I pray to God to guide Your Excellency in steering the summit’s work in a manner that serves the higher interests of our Arab nation.

I also wish to convey my deep thanks and appreciation to His Majesty the King of the Kingdom of Bahrain for his distinguished leadership of joint Arab action throughout the past year, with wisdom, dedication, and foresight.

These days mark a deeply cherished milestone for all Arabs—the 80th anniversary of the founding of the League of Arab States. This venerable organisation has carried the torch of Arabism as a unifying identity and collective aspiration, spanning the lands from the Arabian Gulf to the Atlantic Ocean. Despite the sweeping transformations our region and the world have witnessed over the past decades, the League of Arab States has remained a pillar of unity and the strongest thread binding our peoples together.

The endurance of this institution for eight decades stands as testament to the resilience of Arab societies and the enduring spirit of solidarity that links our nations. This bond is built not upon ethnicity or race, but on a shared cultural and historical legacy, a common language, and a civilisation that embraces a rich religious and cultural pluralism. Arabism, in its most inclusive and enlightened form, remains fully capable of embracing and harmonising this diversity—an enduring strength of our region—and offers an antidote to the destructive polarisation that has afflicted parts of the Arab world in recent years.

This historic occasion invites us to pause for thoughtful reflection on the path travelled by the League of Arab States—an honest and balanced appraisal of its record, avoiding both exaggeration and undue criticism.

One of the core ideals that inspired the founders of this organisation—Arab national security—remains, to this day, an aspiration rather than a reality. Our region continues to face persistent threats and external ambitions, whether from proximate neighbours or global powers. It remains vulnerable to malign interventions that undermine the sovereignty and stability of its member states.

This reflective pause also compels us to evaluate, with clarity and candor, the state of the Arab nation-state itself. Several of our countries are today grappling with existential threats, internal divisions, or even civil wars. The concept of the modern nation-state—a state of citizenship, rights, and institutions—has yet to take firm root across the entire Arab landscape. Its fragility remains a principal cause of many of the conflicts and upheavals that have compromised our collective security and cohesion. These vulnerabilities continue to expose critical fissures in the edifice of Arab national security and underscore the urgent need for comprehensive reform, state-building, and a renewed social contract rooted in inclusion, justice, and rule of law.

Mr. President,

In Sudan, an open wound continues to afflict the conscience of the Arab nation. The ongoing war has precipitated what is now considered the gravest humanitarian catastrophe in the world. The very foundations of the Sudanese state—its sovereignty, territorial integrity, and institutional cohesion—stand under existential threat. Yet, I remain confident in the resilience of the Sudanese people and their capacity to surmount this historic ordeal, rebuild their homeland, and restore national unity, with the essential support and solidarity of their Arab brethren.

In Yemen, the Houthi group persists in its insistence on monopolising the nation's wealth and institutions, dragging the country into continued confrontations and suffering of unfathomable proportions. The situation in this cherished Arab nation will not see meaningful improvement until this group recognises the futility of its current path and commits to a comprehensive national process aimed at restoring Yemen’s unity and stability.

In Libya, political fragmentation continues to threaten the unity and sovereignty of the state. We are observing, with mounting concern, the escalating tensions in Tripoli and the western region. I appeal to all parties to place the supreme interest of the homeland above narrow calculations, and to take urgent steps to avert further deterioration. Only through dialogue, consensus, and a genuine commitment to national reconciliation can Libya emerge from its current impasse and embark upon a future worthy of its people’s aspirations.

In Somalia, multiple challenges persist, and we reiterate our unwavering support for the federal government in its efforts to safeguard the country’s sovereignty and territorial integrity. The League of Arab States remains committed to standing by Somalia in its pursuit of peace, stability, and development.

With regard to Syria, the country is navigating a critical juncture as it seeks to construct a new social and political compact in which all its citizens—irrespective of sect, ethnicity, or background—are guaranteed safety, equality, and dignity. We affirm our solidarity with the Syrian people and government in overcoming these formidable challenges. I am confident that lifting the unilateral US sanctions would foster a more conducive economic environment and bolster the Syrian people’s ability to rebuild and look to the future with hope.

As for Lebanon, the nation finds itself at a historic crossroads, as it seeks to restore effective governance, assert full state sovereignty, and curb the proliferation of arms outside the framework of legitimate state institutions. These efforts are taking place amid continued Israeli aggressions that flagrantly violate Lebanese sovereignty and contravene the cessation of hostilities agreements. We express our steadfast confidence in the ability of the Lebanese state to rise to this profound responsibility and safeguard the future of its people.

Mr. President,

A mere few years after the founding of the League of Arab States, the tragedy of Palestine erupted—an enduring wound that remains the deepest and most painful for the Arab world. The Palestinian cause is, and shall remain, the central cause of the Arab conscience.

Today, the Palestinian people endure an unprecedented war of extermination waged by extremist Israeli forces bent on asserting control over the entirety of historic Palestine and forcibly displacing its indigenous population. This campaign of ethnic cleansing constitutes a moral stain upon its perpetrators—and upon a world that remains largely silent. That such atrocities—including the systematic killing of civilians, women, and children—could unfold with such impunity is a profound indictment of the international order.

Israel’s reckless and aggressive policies—not only in Palestine but also in Syria and Lebanon—are pushing the region into an endless vortex of instability and confrontation. These actions aim to provoke escalation on multiple fronts, under the guise of security and the establishment of so-called buffer zones. We reject and unequivocally condemn these policies, and we warn of their grave consequences for the stability and future of the entire region.

This League has supported the Palestinian cause since its inception. The cause of the Palestinian people and their just right to an independent state on 22% of the area of ​​historic Palestine will remain a central issue for this League until the Palestinian state becomes a tangible reality on the ground.

In this context, I would like to express deep appreciation for the tireless and commendable efforts undertaken by the Arab Republic of Egypt and the State of Qatar in pursuit of a ceasefire agreement. We remain hopeful for the success of these endeavours, which aim to alleviate the suffering of our Palestinian brethren. I also extend sincere thanks to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for its distinguished leadership of the Arab-Islamic Ministerial Committee for the Ceasefire in Gaza, and I wish the Kingdom every success as it prepares to lead the United Nations peace conference in New York next month.

Mr. President,

The League of Arab States enters its ninth decade with renewed confidence and a firm resolve to continue the journey together. United by our common aspirations, we walk this path in solidarity—healing the wounds that have afflicted our nation, supporting one another through adversity, and looking forward with hope to the day when the Arab world reclaims its rightful place among the nations.

We are fully aware that the road to reform is continuous and unending. Yet we move forward with the conviction that genuine transformation begins from within, and believing in the words of God Almighty:

"Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves."

May the peace, mercy, and blessings of God be upon you.

Thank you, Mr. President.