

The meeting of the Council of the League of Arab
States at the summit level, 31st Ordinary Session

The People's Democratic Republic of Algeria

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The speech of
His Excellency Ahmed Aboul Gheit,
Secretary-General of the League of Arab
States, at the Council of the League of Arab
States, 31st Ordinary Session

Mr. President Abdelmadjid Tebboune, Your Excellencies and Highnesses,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First, allow me to extend my sincere and deep gratitude to you, Mr. President, and through you to the beloved people of Algeria and its government, for the generosity and care that we have been surrounded with since our arrival on this benevolent land, and to congratulate you on assuming the presidency of the summit in its 31th session. I pray to God to guide you to what is good for our nation and our people. I also extend my sincere congratulations to you, on behalf of the League of Arab States, on the 68th anniversary of the revolution. This revolution is dear to the hearts of all Arabs. It exalted the values of freedom and the right to self-determination and presented invaluable sacrifices. The revolution became a unique and brilliant example of what people can do and achieve if they seek freedom and dignity.

I also extend my thanks and appreciation to Mr. Kais Saied, President of the Republic of Tunisia, for the appreciated effort made by Tunisia throughout its presidency of the previous summit.

And I seize this opportunity, Mr. President, to pray for mercy for the Arab leaders who passed away: President Beji Caid Essebsi, the late President of Tunisia, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the late Emir of Kuwait, His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, the late Sultan of Oman, and His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the late President of the UAE.

Mr. President,

This summit is taking place after a three-year hiatus owing to the pandemic. I think that holding the summit came at the right time, as the world is witnessing unprecedented changes, the enormous repercussions of which are taking their toll on peoples and countries.

This makes the convening of the summit an absolute necessity, and an opportunity for us to re-arrange our cards and discuss our Arab issues and positions in a world moving too fast with crises taking place in a horrific succession.

The Arab region, whether we like it or not, is in the heart of crises. On the one hand, it is a basic pillar in the equation of energy supplies and global

prices. On the other hand, it is the first victim of climate change and its devastating effects, in terms of drought and other phenomena. Moreover, the region suffers from a serious threat to its food security, and the majority of its countries fall within the scope of water poverty, in addition to what some of its countries face from illegal actions on the part of their neighbours that endanger their water security.

This dangerous trio, food, energy and climate, is interlinked and forms an interdependent system. Food production depends on energy prices and climate stability, and climate change is mainly affected by emissions generated from energy production, and the three elements have become the headline of the global crisis we are witnessing now with all its economic and humanitarian consequences that may intensify this winter. There is no doubt that we are all following the dual effects of the pandemic and the war in Ukraine and the negative economic repercussions it produced and continues to produce. It has become clear that the whole world will have to deal with it for a long time to come.

Our Arab countries are in dire need of a comprehensive strategy to deal with the protracted crisis. I believe it requires long-term planning in order to fortify Arab societies and strengthen their steadfastness in the face of imminent shocks and sudden cataclysms. I am firmly convinced that such planning is not possible without a collective framework and an integrated approach. The Arabs can achieve a lot if they mobilise the Arab capabilities, which are large and diverse, in a correct and scientific manner. The Arab food security strategy presented at the summit is one example of what Arab countries can do collectively in the face of their crises.

Mr. President,

The global conditions are exacerbating the troubles of our countries, and the Arab region is yet to emerge from one of the most serious crises and challenges in its modern history. The region has been through a difficult decade, and some of our countries are still living in conditions that threaten not only their security and stability, but their very existence. The sovereignty, independence, and independent decision-making are still under fierce attack in some corners of our region, ranging from terrorism, militias, and armed groups, as well as non-Arab parties that incite and practise unscrupulous interventions in the region to enforce their control and power.

The defence of the national state, the state of citizenship and the rule of law, in which the loyalty of its citizens is only to its flag, its interests, and its Arab identity, is a defence of the future of all of us. These bloody conflicts that attack the heart of the nation are a threat to all of us. I appeal to you, leaders of the Arab nation, do not let these bleeding wounds affect the present and future of the nation.

I know that Arab countries are exerting much effort to mitigate the impact of crises, and to help their Arab brothers in times of distress. There are, for example, countries that host hundreds of thousands, and more, of Syrian refugees, and countries that do everything in their power to prevent the collapse of our brothers in Yemen, and Somalia is in the abyss of famine. However, honestly, I say that extinguishing the fires of Arab crises, and not just mitigating them or coexisting with them, has become a duty now more than ever before.

It is no longer acceptable to place our Arab crises on the shoulders of an international community that bears heavy burdens and is preoccupied with other pressing issues. The Arab will is capable, in my opinion, of effective intervention to settle Arab crises, if it is strong. This League of Arab States is the sum of your wills, and its ability to move and act depends on the amount of support and the mandate granted to it by states. I am certain that it is capable of acting if there is willpower and consensus.

I am a staunch supporter of the Arabisation of solutions and settlements to the crises facing some of our countries. It is true that the problems are complex and intertwine with regional and international interests. But we as Arabs understand each other, and we know the limits of our interests more than any party outside our system. This is a call to intensify Arab involvement in settling Arab problems and crises. We hope that this will lead to achieving positive results.

Mr. President,

The developments in Syria still require a pioneering and proactive Arab effort to put the Arab footprint on the map of resolving the crisis in this important Arab country. It requires flexibility from all concerned parties so that the darkness of economic collapse and political impasse can be dispelled and we can strive towards a situation that allows Syria to be involved in its

natural Arab surroundings, and in its League of Arab States. Syria is one of the founding states of the League.

As for Libya, we are closely following all developments, and we say that matters require more flexibility from all Libyan parties, mainly with Arab assistance, which is possible, in order to overcome the obstacles that prevent holding elections in the near future. I set it as the goal of achieving the aspirations of the Libyans on the basis of the decisions of your esteemed council.

And in Yemen, the Houthis are still evading and obstructing. Nevertheless, we will continue to support the legitimate government with full force for the benefit of the Yemeni people. Unfortunately, the current developments in Yemen are of the most telling examples of the negative, even destructive, regional influence on the matter.

Mr. President,

Our brothers in Palestine are exercising legendary steadfastness on the ground. Their cause is the cause of all of us. Their long struggle is an honour for this nation. The night of occupation, no matter how long it is, will be dispelled by the dawn of freedom and independence.

Strengthening this heroic Palestinian steadfastness, and defending this pivotal cause, is the duty of every Arab. We are all following the escalation that is taking place in the occupied territories due to the policies of repression and killing practised by the occupation in cold blood. It is an escalation that portends the worst. Unfortunately, the world stands idly by. There is Arab consensus that the two-state solution is the way to end the occupation and establish an independent Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

There is no other way than to launch a serious peace process on the basis of well-known references and international law. We call on all countries of the world to join us in this peaceful struggle by recognising the Palestinian state and approving its membership in the United Nations.

Mr. President,

Our Arab countries need, more than ever before, to strengthen their partnerships across the world. We look forward to the fifth Arab-African

Summit, which will convene in Riyadh next year, and also to the Arab-China Summit, which will also be held in Riyadh next month. There is no doubt that we will take advantage of these important international forums to promote and support collective Arab interests and our positions internationally.

Mr. President,

We really want this meeting to be a summit of reunification, bridging rifts, and gathering collective will. There are positive signs that indicate that this summit will keep pace with the aspirations of Arab public opinion to transform Arab solidarity, which is well-established in feeling and conscience, into work programmes and plans that improve the lives of peoples.

Thank you, Mr. President, and God's peace, mercy and blessings be upon you.