



AFRICAN UNION



LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES

JOINT PRESS RELEASE

CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN THE AFRICAN UNION AND THE LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES ON POLITICAL, PEACE AND SECURITY ISSUES

Addis Ababa and Cairo, 1 December 2015: The General Secretariat of the League of Arab States (LAS) and the Commission of the African Union (AU) met on 30 November 2015 at the Headquarters of the LAS in Cairo, and held extensive consultations on political, peace and security issues of mutual interest. The delegation of the LAS was led by its Secretary-General, Dr. Nabil el-Arabi, and included Dr. Fadel M. Jawad, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Ambassador Khalil Ebrahim Al Thawadi, Assistant Secretary-General, Mr. Ibrahim Gaafar Elsouiri, Coordinator of the LAS Committee on National Security and Combating Terrorism, and Mr. Zeid Al Sabban, Director of Africa and Africa-Arab Cooperation. The AU Commission delegation was led by the Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Smaïl Chergui, and comprised the AU Permanent Representative to the LAS, Ambassador Abdelhamid Bouzahir, and the Director of the Peace and Security Department at the AU Commission, Mr. El-Ghassim Wane.

The two sides exchanged views on ways and means of strengthening their political dialogue and institutionalizing their cooperation in the area of peace and security, bearing in mind the longstanding relations and common interests between the Arab world and the African continent. They noted that nine of the member states of the AU and the LAS belong to both organizations, while half of the Arab population lives in Africa. Accordingly, there are solid geographical, human and political considerations underpinning the partnership between the two organizations and many shared political, peace and security challenges confronting the two regions.

The two sides committed themselves to hold regular high-level consultations and senior officials meetings, to exchange views on political, peace and security issues of common interest, building on the existing mechanisms of the AU-LAS partnership. They also agreed to consider the possibility of joint field missions at secretariat-level, as well as between the relevant policy organs of the two organizations, subject to their concurrence.

The two sides reviewed a number of crisis and conflict situations, including Libya, Somalia, the Darfur region of Sudan, South Sudan and the Comoros. They stressed the need to enhance the efforts being deployed to address the challenges at hand, and agreed to deepen their cooperation. The AU delegation welcomed the humanitarian support provided by the LAS in different conflict areas on the continent, and both sides pledged to further coordinate their efforts and initiatives in this field.

Regarding particularly Libya, the two sides expressed deep concern at the prevailing situation, including the rise of terrorism. They underlined the need for closer international coordination to maximize the impact of the efforts to end the conflict in Libya and foster national reconciliation. In this respect, they acknowledged the important role of the International Contact Group for Libya (ICG-L). The AU delegation informed the Arab League of its intention to step up its role in the search for a solution, in close collaboration with the LAS and the United Nations.

With respect to Somalia, the two sides agreed to work together to consolidate the security gains made in recent years by the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the Somali security forces, as well as the progress recorded in the political process. This will include mobilizing resources for AMISOM and the Somali state institutions, and supporting peace-building efforts on the ground.

Concerning Sudan, the AU delegation briefed the LAS on the efforts, led by the AU High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) in the context of the relevant communiqués of the Peace and Security Council (PSC), to facilitate a cessation of hostilities in Darfur and in the South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, as well as to support the National Dialogue initiative. The two sides agreed to deepen their consultations in this respect and to find ways of enhancing interaction and promoting closer cooperation between the LAS and the AUHIP.

On the Comoros, the discussions focused on the elections scheduled to take place in February and April 2016 for the posts of Governors of the autonomous islands and the rotating presidency of the Union of the Comoros. The two sides emphasized the need for the Comorian stakeholders to preserve and consolidate the gains made so far in the reconciliation and stabilization process in the archipelago.

The LAS delegation gave an update on the situation in Yemen and the related Arab and international efforts, as well as on the Palestinian issue. The AU delegation seized the opportunity to draw attention to the adverse effects of the conflict in Yemen on security in the Horn of Africa.

Finally, the two sides exchanged views on the threat of terrorism and violent extremism. They agreed to enhance their collaboration between the LAS Committee on National Security and Combatting Terrorism and the relevant AU organs, including the Algiers-based African Centre on the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT).