

Informal Consultations

Building the Operational Capabilities of the League of Arab States

Background:

The Arab World has recently been witnessing a wide spectrum of dire crises that have tragically impacted the lives of millions. Both the number and severity of these crises is unprecedented for the region, and they have caused a significant political and economic turmoil in States such as Yemen, Syria, Libya, Somalia and Iraq in a manner that threatens peace and security in the entire region. For League of Arab States (LAS) to effectively tackle and manage these multitude of crises, it has become necessary for LAS to enhance its institutional capacity in the fields of crisis management and response.

LAS – one of the oldest regional alliances in the world– has a responsibility in safeguarding peace and security for its 22 member states. However, its ability to observe this function, and play a more constructive operational role in the ongoing crises in the region, is tightly constrained by the lack of technical expertise in areas of crisis response and management. Historically, LAS has had limited experiences in sending observation missions to crisis zones. Recently when the Syrian crisis erupted in 2011, LAS was involved as an institutional mediator by proposing two peace plans and sending a League of Arab States Observation Mission to Syria. The observation mission, which operated for only 23 days, illustrated the need to expand and develop LAS’s institutional capacity to deploy field missions effectively using internal resources.

The EU-LAS Joint project on Crisis Management:

This experience in Syria highlighted to LAS the importance of further developing its crisis management capabilities. Therefore, LAS and the European Union initiated a joint-project in 2012, entitled “Strengthening the Crisis Response Capacities of the League of Arab States.” A core component of this new phase of the project shall be providing selected LAS staff with comprehensive and intensive 3-year training programs, with a special focus on post-conflict activities. The goal is enhancing and building up the operational capacities of the League of Arab States, which could possibly enable LAS to play a complementary role in crisis management operations within the region through participation in joint-missions

with other international organizations.

The Primary Objective of the Informal Consultations:

In order to achieve this important objective, LAS proposed to organize informal consultations in order to benefit from the longstanding experiences of other regional and international organizations including the United Nations and European Union. The primary objective of these consultations is to aid in the tailoring of the desired LAS training programs benefitting from the varied experiences of our partners, and to pinpoint the most effective areas that LAS can contribute towards. It is especially noteworthy that the composition and nature of LAS as an international organization provide it with a degree of acceptability in some conflict zones that other international organizations lack, enabling it to play a complementary role with the United Nations in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. It is now more imperative than ever for the League to expand its conflict resolution and management capabilities and intensify its coordination and collaboration with other institutions in order to more effectively manage and deal with the current regional crises. We believe that the productive involvement of your organizations will largely enrich these discussions throughout the consultations and benefit the project immensely.