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The Arab League: From Establishment to Failure

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to investigate The Arab League from beginning to present time. The Arab League is a regional political organization that aims to secure the interest of Arab countries. Due to many circumstances and reasons, the League showed a minimal capability of positive intervention to reduce the tensions between the Arab states or in the processing of the integration process between its members or in building peace and stopping wars that are taking place in many countries.

Due to these basic problems, the Arab League was not able to play a role in fighting terrorism and radicalism in the region or to advance in the integration process between its members. Additionally, the League did not highly impact on other matters such as finding solutions to the high rate of violation of basic human rights in the Arab world or to the influx of refugees or to stop wars taking place today in Syria, Libya, and Yemen.

Trying to stop this failure, the Arab Gulf States revived the Gulf Cooperation Council as an alternative for the Arab League but the rich monarchies did not show an effective model of governance to replace the Arab League; at least till today, which leave the Arab population without an influential, active and modern political regional organization to represent and led them to more integration and development.

Keywords: The Middle East, Arab League, Arabian Nationalism, Gulf Countries, Arab Spring

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The Arab League: From Establishment to Failure

Introduction

The Arab League is a regional political organization that aims to secure the interest of Arab countries. Due to many circumstances and reasons, the League showed a minimal capability of positive intervention to reduce the tensions between the Arab states or in the processing of the integration process between its members or in building peace and stopping wars that are taking place in many countries.

The League played some important roles during the 1950s but lost its power and influence after the end of the Cold War. Some of the failures are related to the decision-making process within the League itself, others are just politics resulting from conflicts between its members.

This paper will discuss the establishment of the organization, its major interferences in hot issues, and its recent failures. The organs and bodies of the League will be addressed too as well as other issues related to human rights, terrorism, integration, and refugees' influx.

The Arab League followed closely the "Arab Spring" and showed an indifference towards the popular rising taking place since 2011 which ended by the outbreak of internal wars and conflicts in Syria, Yemen, and Libya, leaving the Arab world without an influential and active regional organization to represent them. This fact, however, led to the reviving of the Gulf Cooperation Council in an attempt to make it an alternative for the non-functioning Arab League organization.

The Arab League's History and Establishment

Since the Arabic Revolution against the Ottoman Turkish rule in 1916, many Middle Eastern have had a goal to unify the Arab world into one big entity. After that period, nationalism was on the rise in the Middle East and elsewhere. The Arabic Nationalism ideology was adopted by many while others were looking for ways to end the presence of Mandatory and Colonial status and to achieve independence. Thus, the formation of the Arab League was complementary to the circumstances that the Arab world was living

and aimed to oppose the post-World War II colonization but ended by playing a role in the struggle against Israel since its establishment in 1948.

With its formation in 1945, Member States have grown from seven original countries to twenty-two Member States, in addition to some Observer States such as India, Turkey, and Chad. The founder States are Egypt, Lebanon, Iraq, Jordan, Syria, Yemen and Saudi Arabia aiming to secure the interests of the Arab World in political, economic, military, security, and cultural fields. The Member States stretch geographically from the far west of northern Africa to the Middle East and the Gulf region.

Arab League Member Countries of the World



Seven countries formed the Arab League in 1945. There are now 22 member states and 6 observer states. The most populous member state is Egypt (76 million inhabitants), and the least populated is Djibouti (about 500,000 inhabitants).

Founding members are listed below.

Egypt	Transjordan (renamed Jordan in 1946)	Saudi Arabia	Yemen
Iraq	Lebanon	Syria	

Members with later admission dates are in chronological order.

Libya (1953)	Kuwait (1961)	Qatar (1971)	The Palestine Liberation Organization (1976)
Sudan (1956)	Algeria (1962)	The United Arab Emirates (1971)	Djibouti (1977)
Morocco (1958)	Bahrain (1971)	Mauritania (1973)	Comoros (1993)
Tunisia (1958)	Oman (1971)	Somalia (1974)	

Future enlargements to the League remain unclear. There are 6 observers.

Eritrea (2003)	Chad (2005)	Venezuela (2006)
Armenia (2005)	Turkey (2005)	India (2007)

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The twenty-two members are Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, Iraq, Palestinian National Authority, Syria (membership now-suspended), Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Yemen, Sudan, Somalia, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Oman, Djibouti, Mauritania, and the Comoros. The center of the organization was located in the Egyptian Capital; Cairo until 1979, but the exclusion of Egypt from the League relocated the center in Tunisia. After a decade Cairo became the League's center again till today. The 22 countries in the Arab League have a population of about 317 million, which is slightly larger than the population of the United States of America. The Arab countries' economy is estimated to be worth around one trillion dollars in 2006, while the Unites States' was worth during the same year around 13.2 trillion dollars (Toffolo, 2008, p. 8).

The Arab League is composed of three important bodies; the General Assembly, the Office of the Secretary-General, and permanent councils related to economics, communication, culture, health, human rights and social work fields. The General Assembly convenes twice a year and each member have one vote only, regardless of the number of its delegation members. Other meetings can take place if two Member State called for "emergency meetings" which is the case recently when many summits and meeting took place with the call of only some members; who are usually the influential Gulf States.

The mechanism of the General Assembly is a debated issue among members, since the Arab League don't have the legislation power to make members abide its resolutions. Most of the resolutions are adopted by the majority and bind the Member's States that voted in their favor. The Secretary-General is elected to his post with a two-thirds majority. His identity is often related to the balance of power of the Member States. Thus, most of the time the Secretary-General was an Egyptian with good relations with Saudi Arabia.

Despite being composed of a more coherent population if compared to the European Union members, the integration between the Arab states and people stayed a theoretical motion and a very distant goal to achieve. This is due to the fact that most of the Member States don't show a will to give up their sovereignty, to open borders for people and goods or to cooperate on regional political matters.

The Charter of the Arab League: Mission and Objectives

The Charter of the Arab League was signed on the 22 March of 1945. Any State who wants to adhere to the League must be an independent country and must sign the Charter. As for the objectives and mission of the League, the Charter proposed in its articles many straight information and goals:

> "The League has as its purpose the strengthening of the relations between the Member States, the coordination of their policies in order to achieve co-operation between them and to safeguard their independence and sovereignty; and a general concern with the affairs and interests of the Arab countries. It has also as its purpose the close cooperation of the member-states, with due regard to the Organization and circumstances of each state, on the following matters: a) Economic and financial affairs, including commercial relations, customs, currency and questions of agriculture an industry. b) Communications; this includes railroads, roads, aviation, navigation, telegraphs and posts. c) Cultural affairs. d) Nationality, passports, visas, execution of judgments and extradition of criminals. e) Social affairs. f) Health affairs" (MacDonald, 1965, pp. 319-320).

Practically, the Arab States undermined each other sovereignty in many occasions and did not achieve a wide cooperation on many matters mentioned in the Charter.

On other matters, the Charter suggest in his 5th Article that:

> "Any resort to force in order to resolve disputes between two or more member-states of the League is prohibited. If there should arise among them a difference which does not concern a state's independence, sovereignty, or territorial integrity, and if the parties to the dispute have recourse to the Council for the settlement of this difference, the decision of the Council shall then be enforceable and obligatory. In such case, the states between whom the difference has arisen shall not participate in the deliberations and decisions of the Council. The Council shall mediate in all differences which threaten to

> lead to war between two member-states, or a member-state and a third state, with a view to bringing about their reconciliation. Decisions of arbitration and mediation shall be taken by majority vote" (MacDonald, 1965, p. 321).

Despite prohibiting members to resort to force, the Member States did use force against each other's interests in many occasions. Egypt entered Yemen during the 1960s. Syria occupied Lebanon between 1976 and 2005. Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990. Morocco, Algeria, and Mauritania used force against each other in order to find a solution for the Western Sahara issue since 1975, and many other similar types of conflicts and confrontations. On another issue related to war, the Charter had a saying in his 6th Article on aggression committed by non-members countries against the Member States:

> "In case of aggression or threat of aggression by one state against a member-state, the state which has been attacked or threatened with aggression may demand the immediate convocation of the Council. The Council shall by unanimous decision determine the measures necessary to repulse the aggression. If the aggressor is a member-state, his vote shall not be counted in determining unanimity. If, as a result of the attack, the government of the state attacked finds itself unable to communicate with the Council, the state's representative in the Council shall request the convocation of the Council for the purpose indicated in the foregoing paragraph. In the event that this representative is unable to communicate with the Council, any member-state of the League shall have the right to request the convocation of the Council" (MacDonald, 1965, pp. 321-322).

In many cases, the Arab League did not do anything other than denouncing an attack taking place between the Member States, while sometimes aggressor did surprisingly vote on the matter. In the case of non-member attack on a Member State, the Arab League took occasionally some measures. The Israeli aggressions against the Palestinians was dealt with by the Arab League members in a pro-military way during the wars of 1967 and 1973, while other wars such as the Iraq – Iran war (1980-1988) was not dealt with in a military action by the Member States. Historically, the Member States solely

take decisions to launch a war and never under the umbrella of the Arab League. The latter just backs them diplomatically.

Main Bodies and Organs

The Arab League have many bodies and organs created over the years. According to the official website of the Arab League[‡], the main institutions, organs, and bodies are the following: The Council of the League which is the supreme organ composed of representatives from the Member States and coordinates the League's activities and appoints the Secretary-General. Set up since 1950, The Joint Defense Council is composed of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Defense from all the member states.

Additionally, the Economic and Social Council aims to promote the means for the economic and social development of the Arab world. It also coordinates the activities of the specialized agencies such as the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, the Arab Fund for Assistance to Arab and African Countries, the Arab Monetary Fund, the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development, the Industrial Development Centre for Arab States, the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa, the Arab Council for Civil Aviation, the Arab Postal Union, the Arab Telecommunication Union, the Arab Labor Council, the Council for Arab Unity and others.

The Committees fall into three different categories; Committees set up at each General Session with a lifetime related to the timing of the Session; the "ad hoc" Committees responsible for carrying out specific tasks; and the "Permanent Committees", which study problems within their sphere of competence and submit their findings to the Council of the League. There are Permanent Committees for political matters, social questions, health, culture, economic matters, information, oil, finance, and administration.

The Secretariat General is the institution of the League of the Arab States responsible for implementing decisions taken by the Council of the League. It is headed by the Secretary-General with the assistance of several Assistant Secretary-Generals and a staff who are normally

[‡] See the official website of the Arab League on http://www.lasportal.org

permanent but sometimes temporary. The Secretary-General is elected by a majority of two-thirds of the members, although in practice he has always been appointed unanimously. The appointment is for five years. His key role is to represent the Arab world at the international level.

Most of the organs and bodies were created during the 1950s years in a time that did witness moderate competitive action between Arab countries. The internal laws, functions, and power of these committees were agreed on during that period (Hershlag, 1975, p. 192), and were not updated since almost 70 years which cause many problems in the decision-making process of the Arab League.

The Decision-Making Process

Other than the contradictions between the interests of the Member States, one of the reasons of the many failures of the Arab League to become an important and influential organization is related to its decision-making process. "Within all of the constructing institutions, the decision-making institution is of the utmost importance. A mature decision-making system is able to promote efficient and reasonable cooperation among member states, and can also reflect the real degrees of interdependency among members and integrations within the League" (Chen & Zhao, 2009, pp. 59-60).

Compared with other Regional and International Organization, the process of decision-making in the Arab League lacks many requirements such as the ability to mediate between members, the inefficiency of many branches and councils in the League, and the absence of the power of implementation of decisions (Chen & Zhao 2009, p. 60). In the Arab League cases, many conflicting interests between the Member States made the League incapable of reaching decisions or mediating between different countries. Additionally, many branches and councils don't have power or are well financially funded which leave them unable to function properly.

When it comes to the decision-making process, the main problem is that decisions in the Arab League are not binding leaving each State the capability to execute them or not. This fact led to many issues and

additional conflicts when Member States vote in favor of a decision in the meetings of the League then change its decision after a period of time leaving the decision already agreed on meaningless.

Additionally, a conflict of power exists in the League between the Council and the Permanent Committee. The Council enjoys the decision power at the theoretical level, while the Permanent Committee is in charge of drawing up a wide range of policies. Many other sub-councils such as The Joint Defense Council and the Economic and Social Council share power with the Council and enjoy only relative and temporary decision-making power rather than absolute and independent one (Chen & Zhao 2009, pp. 61-62).

The decision-making process in Arab League is based on the negotiations among its Member States. Despite being the main role of the organization, the Arab League was rarely capable of transforming Member States' common interest into a common policy. Instead, the decision-making process in the Arab League is left for the game of the balance of power, where powerful members can enforce decisions on others while small weak members try to avoid their implementation. During the 1950s and 1960s, Egypt and Saudi Arabia played the leading role in the decision-making process of the League, while Iraq, Syria, and Algeria shared this role in the 1970s and 1980s with the two mentioned countries. During the last two decades, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar showed a leading role in the organization at the expense of Iraq, Syria, Egypt, and Algeria.

Some Member States and local organizations pushed for the reform of the Arab League to the agenda during the last two decades. Many wanted to adopt more human rights related issues in the Charters, other wanted to change the decision-making process in the League but none of the changes were met with openness (Rishmawi, 2013, pp. 50-52) leaving the Arab League incapable of playing a leading role in the international and regional conflicts.

Arab League Interventions and "Peace Initiative"

The Arab League did not play a leading role when it came to military intervention since direct cross-border invasions or overt military interventions were exceedingly rare in Arab politics (Lynch,

2016, pp. 59-61). The League is usually used as a tool in order to back plans or interventions of one or more of its members, or as a respond to Western countries. Two cases can be studied in this regards.

When a serious military crisis was going on between Iraq and Kuwait between 1961 and 1963, the Arab League took part in defending Kuwait's sovereignty. Responding to a British demand and with the cooperation of Saudi Arabia, an Arab League military committee was sent to Kuwait to discuss the necessary preparations for a peacekeeping mission followed by signing an agreement providing the establishment of an Arab League Security Force responsible for the defense of Kuwait. After this, an agreement was signed and Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Sudan began to dispatch soldiers to Kuwait so that British troops can withdrawal from Kuwait (Bismarck, 2009, p. 87). Another example can be given about the Arab League intervention in the Lebanese in 1976 one year before the Syrian troops entered the country. Due to the domination of Syria during the first years of the Lebanese civil war, the Arab League was forced to send Arab Deterrent Force in order to contain the military situation. The Arab Forces were mainly formed of Syria troops and answers almost entirely to the Syrian leadership, giving the Syrians a sort of Arabic legitimacy to military enter and stay in Lebanon (El-Khazen, 2000, pp. 353-360).

Thus, the actions of the Arab League were mostly parallel to the balance of forces between the Arabic States. Additionally, the Arab League and the Arabic States showed more strength positions when the raised issues were related to Israel. The Arab League usually backs the Palestinian cause, denounces Israeli attacks, and bashes any country that holds peace with Israel. In 2002, and in a first, the Arab League launched during the Summit of Beirut an "Arab Peace Initiative" aiming to end the Israeli – Palestinian wars;

> "The Initiative proposed a multilateral approach to bring an end to that dispute in which Arab countries endorsed a two-state solution – Israel would respect the lines on June 1967, a Palestinian state would take over the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and also find a "just solution" to the refugee issue, and in return, Arab countries would formally recognize Israel […]

> this road map was not implemented, but it still remains a reference point for the slowly moving negotiations" (Swain & Jägerskog, 2016, p. 12).

In some cases, the interventions of the Arab league worked in easing conflicts but not in resolving them. In many other cases, the military interventions did not take place, and political interventions, mediations, and peace initiatives did not result in any solution or an advance towards resolving the many conflicts that the Arabs have.

The Missing Role of the Arab League

During the 1960s the Arab League pushed for the Liberation of Palestine and supported the 1967 and 1973 Arab wars against Israel and the creation of the Palestinian Liberation Organization. Additionally, the League suspended Egypt's membership in 1979 when Cairo established a peace deal with Israel a year before and relocated the organization headquarter in Tunisia. During the Cold War years, the Arab league was an active organization with a saying in the Arabic matters even if its impact was minimal (Tucker, 2015, p. 111). After the 1991's Gulf War, the impact and activities of the League will be more diminishing.

A narrow margin ambiguous resolution was taken by the League during the Gulf War that condemned Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and gave a green light for the Syrian, Egyptian, and Moroccan forces to send troops as part of building an international coalition under the leadership of the Unites States. The Arab League lost most of its theoretical sovereignty during that period when responding to the "obligations" of the New World Order headed by the United States.

Many other crises shocked the Arab world since then; Israel occupied more Palestinian lands, a civil war took place in Sudan between 1983 and 2003, Iraq was invaded by the United States and its allies in 2003, Israel attacked Lebanon in 2006, in addition to a long list of internal crisis in the Member States related to economy, pollution, social unrests, lack of respect for human rights and terrorism. The Arab League was losing its ability to be an active influential regional actor in the Member States' affairs.

This failure of the Arab League is due to a long series of problems that can range from the internal decision-making process of the League itself to the rise of opposite political interests between the Member States. The formation of different axis between the Arab States grow after the 1990s; The Gulf States, led by Saudi Arabia, formed an axis allied to the United States; Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon were more close to the emerging Iran; while Egypt lost its influential role in the Arabic affairs and wasn't able to influence any issue far from Palestine and Sudan; and the Northern African Member States continued to look after their own affairs as usual, away from the issues of the Middle East.

This political differences between the Arab States had an impact on the work of the Arab League and made its influence very low. The late Libyan president Mouammar El-Gaddafi have put this issue in a very sarcastic yet a real description of the Arab League work and political differences between its members in the Damascus Summit in 2008 stating that: "We all have problems with each other. There is nothing common between us except this room" (El-Gaddafi Attacks, 2008). This situation was even better than it is today or as it was during the "Arab Spring" period when unrests shocked many Arabic countries and led, in most cases, to internal wars and rise of terrorism and radicalism.

The "Arab Spring" and the Arab Divisions

The "Arab Spring" was a revolutionary wave of both violent and non-violent demonstrations, protests, and unrests that took place in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Bahrain, Yemen and Syria starting 2011 and led to a civil war in Syria, Yemen, and Libya and to ongoing unrests in Tunisia and Egypt. The revolutionary wave wasn't met with Arab League leaders with positivity since it aimed to remove them from their posts.

The Arab League was in a shock on how to deal with these developments and choose the path of silence and neglecting the "Arab Spring" as a whole, while referring to the main rhetoric of the old problems of the Arabs; Israel. After six years of the "Arab Spring",

the Amman Summit in 2017 have ended without any major announcements. It did, however, provide an important window on the latest attempts by Arab regimes to shape their views and policies in the post-Arab spring period. Arab leaders were keen to address the Israeli occupation and its expansion of settlement construction on occupied Palestinian land and to show support for the Palestinian cause - often called the "number one" or "central" cause for Arab nations. Six years later, there was hardly any talk at the summit about the revolutions or the need to protect the democratic transition" (Arab Spring divisions, 2017).

Between 2011 and 2012, the Arab League took limited steps in relation to the "Arab Spring". Many noticed that:

> "While these developments may have broken with some of the practices of the past, they do not reflect a fundamental change in the work of the mechanisms of the League inspired by a set of coherent policy decisions, nor have they led to a new systematic approach within the League with regards to human rights. Arguably, some of the positions taken by the League in 2011 and 2012 -when cries for freedom and democracy rocked the Middle East and North Africa - illustrate that respect for human rights principles and international law is slowly but increasingly featuring in the work of the League. Despite this, the League has missed countless opportunities to play a constructive and decisive role in systematically ensuring that its member states respect and protect human rights at all times […] It should be highlighted that most of the League's major decisions related to reform initiatives in Arab countries have been made by the political bodies of the League. As such, balances of power and political interests and considerations continue to be the main impetus behind these decisions" (Rishmawi, 2013, pp. 49-50).

The Arab League came out as a mediocre actor during and after the "Arab Spring"; Western countries attacked Libya, Syria, and Yemen without the consent or the need for the Arab League approval; Arabs, mainly Qatar and Saudi Arabia, disagreed on the Coup d'état that took place in Egypt; initiatives were launched in order to find peaceful solutions to the Syrian and the Yemeni crises but failed to

find any settlements to pull out these two countries of civil war situation.

The conflict between the League Members States intensified after the "Arab Spring" and many additional problems were underway. The three heavyweights; Iraq, Syria, and Egypt, lost their influence within the Arab regional politics and decision-making process. Libya, Yemen, and Syria are drowned in their own internal problems. Palestine, Tunisia, and Lebanon are witnessing major crises of governance and large-scale local divisions. Sudan was divided into two independent states in 2011 (South of Sudan and North of Sudan). The limited regional conflicts between Qatar and Saudi Arabia over the Egyptian, Yemeni and Syrian issues took between 2011 and 2016 a major spotlight in the Arabic Regional conflicts. The rise of terrorism and refugee crisis in the Arab world was not taken seriously or dealt with effectively by the League.

The Arab League and Fighting Terrorism

The Arab League showed a growing interest to combat terrorism and radicalism both at the Arabic level and the international level in particular by following the implementation of the Security Council and the General Assembly resolutions of the United Nations. The League always denounces terrorism and radicalism and invites its members and the world to distinguish between terrorism and Islam (Alshdaifat, 2017, p. 42). A little have been done in the de-radicalization process of youth and inhabitants of the Arab world in the time when terrorism keeps rising, but the League always showed a will to do so and declared the need for a "clear and firm decision for a comprehensive confrontation with cancerous and terrorist groups" (Dragan, 2015, p. 7).

In 1998, a joint meeting of the Ministers of Interior and Justice of the Arab League adopted the Arab Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism. It is true to say that this adaptation remains a theoretical act but it is a step forward to identifying Terrorism and to fight it later. The Convention is an elaborate outcome of the Arab League and its member's endeavor to maximize the level of cooperation among them in the field of combating international terrorism (Nesi, 2006, p. 155). The definition of terrorism in the Convention is as follow:

> "Any act or threat of violence, whatever its motives or purposes, that occurs in the advancement of an individual or collective criminal agenda and seeking to sow panic among people, causing fear by harming them, or placing their lives, liberty or security in danger, or seeking to cause damage to the environment or to public or private installations or property or to occupying or seizing them, or seeking to jeopardize a national resource" (Elagab & Elagab, 2007, p. 503).

Despite its definition, the Arab states and the League showed a will to fight terrorism by joining international agreements and convention aiming to define and fight terrorism. They even took part in the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Treaty which aims to assist the international community in lowering the likelihood that terrorists acquire a nuclear weapon (Dawoody, 2016, p. 172).

On another hand, some suggested that:

> "The Arab League must first build democratic legitimacy for its response to terrorism to be effective. This would unequivocally imply strengthening the Arab Convention for the Suppression of Terrorism so that it can meet international standards of human rights protection and precisely define terrorism and related notions. A more short-term solution would entail a shift in discourse from just condemning terrorism and instead calling for concrete actions that are also implemented. In this sense, the Arab League could promote initiatives to prevent Arabs from joining extremist factions, request member states to impose stricter border controls and facilitate a more effective tracking and prevention of funding of fundamentalist groups" (Dragan, 2015, p. 17).

The Arab League has declared the Lebanese Shiite Muslim movement Hezbollah a terrorist organization - a week after a similar move by Arab Gulf states. The decision on Hezbollah came at a meeting of foreign ministers of the 22 Arab League members in Cairo. Lebanon and Iraq had not supported the decision, having expressed "reservations" during the meeting. The Arab League decision to classify Hezbollah as a terrorist organization brought them into line with the United States and the European Union - although the latter has only blacklisted the group's military wing (Arab League brands

Hezbollah, 2016). This kind of action of the Arab League are seen as an act of pressure against groups backed by Iran and are driven by the regional conflict taking place in the Middle East between Iran and its militant branches on one side and the mainly Gulf States on the other.

The Arab League, Human Rights a Refugees Crisis

The Arab Charter on Human Rights was adopted by the Council of the Arab League in 2004. The Charter affirms the principles contained in the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the International Covenants on Human Rights and the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam.

Arab League commissions related to human rights issues have mostly contented themselves with one-sided attention to Israel's policies while ignoring the gross and systematic violations in many Arab countries. It wasn't until 2011 when the Arab League organs confronted the authoritarianism and atrocity in Libya, calling out for outside intervention as some observers thought this was because of El-Gaddafi attitude against the rest of the Arab League members (Forsythe, 2012, p. 191).

Despite efforts done by the Permanent Commission on Human Rights in the Arab League during the last years, many efforts need to be done in order to find solutions for the many human rights problems that the Member States still have. A series of social, economic and cultural problems related to the human rights field are one of the most dangerous problems that the Arabs have. The refugee crisis is one of these problems.

The Arab League response to the refugee's crisis resulting from the Libyan, Syrian and Yemeni wars "is shameful" as a direct article published on Al-Arabiya suggested:

> "Everyone is talking about the refugee crisis overwhelming Europe – everyone apart from the League of Arab States. To date it has had little to say on the topic and, as far as I can tell, has no plan to help alleviate the problem. Why have there not been any emergency summits announced? Where are the

> voices from Arab capitals offering solutions? Perhaps there is a notice pinned to the League's front door with the words 'Gone fishing' […] Our countries have wealth and we have lands, and so it is little wonder that Europeans are increasingly asking "where are the Arabs?" The League is made up of 22 countries, yet two of the poorest – Jordan and Lebanon – are bearing the brunt of the refugee influx" (Al-Habtoor, 2015).

The Article continues by saying that:

> "The majority of the refugees are Syrians fleeing war and terrorism in their hundreds of thousands. Scared and tired, they trudge on hoping there is somewhere on this planet where they can live in peace. Instead, thousands have been met with barbed wire fences, riot police wielding batons, tear gas and water cannons. You would have to have a heart of stone not to be moved by the hardships and indignities these people are being made to suffer […] We will shortly be celebrating *Eid al-Adha* with family and friends, enjoying good meals and good company, while tens of thousands of Syrians at the mercy of European states go without food and shelter, their future uncertain. Enough! It is the time for the Arab League to resume its duties, and try to salvage our Arab honor" (Al-Habtoor, 2015).

The Arab League is not playing an effective role in finding a solution to the refugee crisis. Instead, it is taking the path of silence giving a blind eye to the issue and making every Member States take care of its own problems with refugees. After five years of refugees' influx, this crisis showed the high level of the none-functionality of in term of taking any responsibility in important matters, and the deep political divisions between the Arab States which led to the revival of another regional organization during the last years where some suggested that its role is to take some responsibility from the Arab League; the Gulf Cooperation Council.

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The Gulf Cooperation Council: Alternative for the Arab League?

After the many failures of the Arab League, the Gulf countries revived the Gulf Cooperation Council which was established in 1981. This regional organization is compromising of the energy-rich Gulf monarchies; Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates that achieved some sort of union between its members. The founding Charter of the organization focuses on issues related to security as well on social and cultural cohesion process, environmental and scientific coordination, and economic cooperation.

Due to the failure of the Arab League, the Gulf Cooperation Council has become during recent years the main forum of the dominant member Saudi Arabia and its neighbor; Qatar. Many of the work of this organization is done behind closed doors which is compatible with how the Gulf monarchy's States function.

The organization used its loose joint fighting forces; Peninsula Shield Force, in 2011 to suppress the protests in Bahrain. The force did not intervene in the 1991 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, or other wars, leaving the organization as a mediocre actor in the regional issue in the Arab world. It is important to mention that the organization have close security ties with the United States of America (Sikimic, 2014) and is usually seen as an ally to the West and on the opposite side of the Iranian Republic.

The Gulf Cooperation Council has always tried to influence the region and take a lead in forums like the Arab League. Since the "Arab Spring", however, clear moves have been made to expand the organization. In 2011, Morocco and Jordan applied to join it. Many consider the new revival of the Gulf Cooperation Council aimed to replace the Arab League giving the Gulf States more dominance and influence on the Arabic issues but the Council did not present until now an encompassing and effective model of governance to replace the Arab League (Fioramonti, 2014, p. 162), but the existence of the idea of looking into an alternative for the League raise the question of the latter incompetence to achieve integration or assure security, respect of human rights, and vast cooperation between its Member States.

Conclusion

Since the establishment of the Arab League, many conflicts erupted in the Arab world. The League was able - mainly between the 1950s and 1970s – to play a role in easing tension in some areas and to back countries and military groups for the interest of Arabs. The League took a positive part of the Iraq - Kuwait crisis in 1961, backed the Palestinian cause, and showed the aggression of Israel to the world.

After the end of the Cold War, the role of the Arab League as an influential actor in the Regional conflicts faded due to the decision-making process of the League's organs and bodies that dates back to the early years of the 1950s and to emerging conflicts of interests between its members; mainly the active one such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Iraq and Syria.

Due to these basic problems, the Arab League was not able to play a role in fighting terrorism and radicalism in the region or to advance in the integration process between its members. Additionally, the League did not highly impact on other matters such as finding solutions to the high rate of violation of basic human rights in the Arab world or to the influx of refugees or to stop wars taking place today in Syria, Libya, and Yemen.

Trying to stop this failure, the Arab Gulf States revived the Gulf Cooperation Council as an alternative for the Arab League but the rich monarchies did not show an effective model of governance to replace the Arab League; at least till today, which leave the Arab population without an influential, active and modern political regional organization to represent and led them to more integration and development.

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