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By Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo

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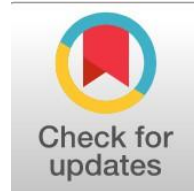
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The Political Role of the United Arab Emirates in The Parliament of The Arab League

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Abstract

General Background: This study examines the establishment of the Transitional Arab Parliament within the reform of the Arab joint action system between 2005 and 2011. **Specific Background:** The Parliament emerged from Arab reform initiatives since 2003 aimed at expanding popular participation and introducing oversight mechanisms within the League of Arab States. **Knowledge Gap:** Limited scholarly focus exists on the institutional performance and political roles of member states, particularly the United Arab Emirates, within this transitional parliamentary framework. **Aims:** The study aims to analyze the legal foundation, organizational structure, consultative competencies, and operational mechanisms of the Parliament, while assessing its performance and the role of the United Arab Emirates. **Results:** Findings indicate that the Parliament functioned as a consultative body addressing major regional issues, including the Palestinian cause, Sudan, and Arab–Iranian dialogue, while also reflecting institutional limitations during its transitional phase. **Novelty:** The study provides a focused examination of the United Arab Emirates' political role within the Parliament alongside institutional analysis of the Arab parliamentary experiment. **Implications:** The findings contribute to understanding regional parliamentary development and highlight structural challenges in advancing collective Arab institutional frameworks.

Highlights:

- Transitional parliamentary body addressed key regional political issues
- Institutional structure combined consultative and oversight functions
- Member state participation revealed structural and procedural limitations

Keywords: Arab Parliament, United Arab Emirates, League Of Arab States, Institutional Reform, Regional Governance

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المقدمة

Since the dawn of the third millennium, the Arab regional system has gone through deep and significant political and security changes, coupled with regional and international demands to breathe more reform within the framework of Arab joint action, and to develop its institutional mechanisms. Against this backdrop, the federative model of the League of Arab States, which was founded on 22 March 1945, has been at the center of all this reform discussion, with one overriding Arab framework for the Arab states. A variety of proposals have emerged aimed at updating its Charter, deepening economic integration, and re-evaluating decision-making processes, as well as increasing citizen engagement in the making of regional policies.

Here, the creation of the Transitional Arab Parliament in 2005 marked the end of a path of reform (political, economic, and military), trying to give the Arab League a parliamentary aspect. It was essentially supposed to be a kind of political check on power, and a way for the expressed will of Arab peoples to come through the representatives of national legislative councils. How it was perceived: The Parliament was thus seen as a form of intermediate stage working toward the ultimate establishment of a permanent Arab Parliament to meet the growing needs of Arab people through greater transparency, accountability, and regional governance.

But for the sobering experience of the Transitional Arab Parliament to pose basic questions about the limits of its efficiency, the nature of its advisory competences, and its ability to have a say in decision-making at the League of Arab States level. Moreover, the role of studying interaction patterns between the Member States and this institution throughout, was not less important as the experience of the United Arab Emirates which has been an active model in the use of parliamentary diplomacy in Arab context.

Therefore, this study aims to study the experience of the Transitional Arab Parliament during the period (2005–2011), especially since it reflected its establishment, roles, and limited role in any influence and Emirati will share in this experience.

Research Problem:

The study is limited by the following main question: To what extent has the formation of the Transitional Arab Parliament (2005–2011) contributed to the evolution of the system of joint Arab action and the development of the institutional and control structures of the League of Arab States, especially during the period from the formation of the Transitional Arab Parliament (in 2005) to the Arab Spring, which affected political paths and systems of governance in Arab countries?

This main query then spirals into other sub-queries:

1. What political and legal contexts led to the foundation of the Transitional Arab Parliament in 2005?
2. What were the character of its competences and the way that it functioned on ground during this period of transition?
3. Did the Transitional Parliament manage to go beyond its consultative function to have a real impact on Arab decision-making?

First: Significance of the Study

There are several reasons which denote the significance of this study:

1. Theoretical Significance: This work helps to enrich the studies related to Arab Regionalism by considering the case of an institutional experience that is attempt to foster regional governance in the Arab system.
2. Institutional Significance: Examine the Implementation of Parliamentary and Political Representation in the Arab League, focusing on one of the most highprofile reform that has taken place in the League of Arab States, and its influence in enhancing parliamentary oversight and political representation regionally, and whether it could be a passway to rectify some of the shortcomings in managing different Arab issues.
3. Practical Significance: This research abstracts an analytical reading of the experience of the Transitional Parliament, which could be used in the establishment of the permanent Arab Parliament and the increase of its jurisdictions. It also focuses on the necessity of studying the political role and the political presence of the United Arab Emirates in the framework of the League of Arab States and the Transitional Arab Parliament, and demonstrating the role of Emirati parliamentary diplomacy in supporting national causes and Arab issues, and conveying the panorama of the solidarity of member state with regional institutions.

Research Hypothesis:

The study is built on the following primary hypothesis:

1. The Transitional Arab Parliament constituted a significant reform development for the League of Arab States' institutional

structure but its relatively limited advisory competences and lack of binding executive instruments inhibited its influence on Arab decision-making.

2. From this assumption follows a subsidiary hypothesis: The successfulness i.e. effectiveness of the Transitional Arab Parliament revolved around the degree of interaction of its Member States i.e. countries, in which some like the UAE represented a good model in activating the parliamentary diplomacy in the Arab domain. Question 2: What was the nature of the United Arab Emirates' presence in the entity of the Arab Parliament and what are its political and institutional implications?

Research Methodology:

Methodological approaches used in this study by the researcher include the following:

The Descriptive-Analytical Approach: to illustrate the birth of the Transitional Arab Parliament, its organizational setup and its functions, and to analyze its actual work during the period (2005–2011).

The Institutional Approach which aims at analyzing the evolution of the institutional framework of the League of Arab States and to assess the status of the Arab Parliament within its institutional structure.

A case study approach: to examine the membership of the UAE in the Transitional Arab Parliament as a case example of a national-based relationship with a regional body.

Analysis of Sources:

It depended on official documents of the League of Arab States, resolutions of Arab summits, reports of news agencies apart from specialized academic references.

Structure of the Study:

The work consists of three sections:

Part One: Historiography of the birth of the Transitional Arab Parliament 2005: Perspectives of Reform, Law, and Organization

Part Two: United Arab Emirates: Economic Dynamics and Political Role in the Period of the Transitional Arab Parliament (2005–2011)

The Arab League and the Arab Parliament

The sectional arrangement: Section one: A legal, organizational, and reformist perspective to the emergence of the Arab Parliament (2005): A gradual history approach

The Arab Initiatives to Establish a Unified Arab Parliament 1

The Arab Parliament idea crystallized in two seminars: the first was organized in Baghdad in 1983 and a second in Amman - Jordan - in 1986. In the early 1990s, parliamentarians were again talking about: a parliamentary seminar was organized in Beirut about the unified Arab Parliament. The Seminar of Beirut (13 December 1999) attended by two Arab Legislators was held pursuant of recommendation adopted by conference of Ninth Conference of Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union held in Tunisia in Feb-2004. Consequently, Resolution No.(29), was issued, affirming that Arab Ministers are to establish a unified Arab Parliament through an international agreement that is to be signed between Arab states, according to their constitutions and laws, and in a manner that does not conflict with their internal systems.

This Parliament was thought of as the nucleus of this Parliament, and the formation, structure and competencies of the Parliament were based on the principle of equality between the Arab states, along with its position in the institutions of joint Arab action (Ahmed Al-Rashidi, 2005, 108).

The proposed Parliament would primarily serve as a center of popular oversight. Another critical aspect that was viewed as essential for developing and expanding joint Arab action to deal with the problems threatening the Arab World in many fields was enhancing financial supervision over League budget, its joint projects, and any future financial resources which would be independent from member state contributions (Mohammad Barout, 2004, pp. 448–449).

On March 2001, at the Amman Summit, this was further stressed in Resolution No. (218), which instructed the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Amr Moussa, to take necessary steps to modernize and develop the mechanisms of joint Arab action ends. The latter was reaffirmed on 12 February 2002 at the Tenth Conference of the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union in Khartoum, as well as during the forty-third regular session in Beirut from 2 to 4 June 2003 (Ahmed Al-Rashidi, 2005: 109).

Then, the Summit of Sharm El-Sheikh in Egypt, adopted Resolution No.(248) on 1/3/2003. And because of these discussions,

this resolution was applied, the General Secretariat of the League of the Arab States invited to convene a special ministerial council for the league at the ministerial level for 1–2 March 2004. Outcome of these discussions was agreement on a paper called the "Covenant of Accord, Solidarity, and Cooperation among Arab Leaders" with suggestions for amendments to the structure and charter of the League. It was assigned to the Council of the League at the ministerial level to prepare the amendments and develop them into their final form and to submit them to the seventeenth Arab Summit held in Algeria.

With the transformations of the world and the region, it became more necessary than ever to reform and develop the joint Arab action system, which is an essential entrance to boosting the role of League of Arab States and further enhancing the Arab regional system in terms of confidence.

One of the key reasons behind that trend was the growth and pluralisation of spheres of international collaboration, which in its turn brought about increasing volume of functions to be assigned to international organizations for the purposes of facilitating and enhance such collaboration.

1. A Criticism of Old-style Diplomacy and a Demand for a More Transparent Development-oriented Diplomacy
2. The expansion of people-to-people and cultural exchanges.
3. The growing influence and reach of civil society at the international and national level and the broadening base of national dialogue within states beyond that of political parties to pressure groups and social, economic, and professional interests.
4. An increased push for at least similar international levels of transparency and accountability, especially through international organizations.
5. The increasing tendency of collaboration between the most important domestic political and social forces across countries (Mohammad Barout, 2004, p. 643).

In light of these feedbacks, the League of Arab States (as the umbrella that houses the shared vision for pan-Arab action) in 2003 solicited member states with suggestions on how to ameliorate its functionality. A number of Arab states—Egypt, Libya, Sudan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Tunisia and Syria—published reform visions and proposals in response. The Secretary-General brought these together into a single initiative which was presented to Arab states and adopted at the meeting of Arab Foreign Ministers in Cairo on 21 March 2004.

Others included a trilateral initiative between Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Syria dated 25 February 2004 and a Gulf initiative with Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, and Oman, which was made prior to the Cairo Summit. These initiatives all reached the same focal points, primarily: That the Arab Common Market be the entrance to Arab integration; that there must be internal economic reforms; expansion of the private sector role; strengthening of linkages with other blocks; support for sustainable development and civil society; the reform of voting mechanisms within the League; establishing an Arab Parliament; along with the establishment of a body to follow up on the implementation of Arab summit resolutions (Hassan Abu Taleb, 2005, pp. 104–105).

Arab initiatives that called for the establishment of a unified Arab Parliament differed in general format and weighted nature. Most remarkable was Yemeni proposal that emerged during the meeting of Arab Foreign Ministers in the League of Arab States of 21 March 2004 in Cairo, stressing the need for an Arab Parliament with powers similar to the powers of national parliaments especially in the field of legislation and oversight. As part of the greater demand for a union of Arab states, national assembly represented the legislative authority for this union and part of the basis from which Arab peoples demanded a right to supervision and oversight of the institutions of the union (Ghada Abdel Hamid, 2005, p. 305).

In the same vein, the Egyptian Initiative announced in Cairo on March 3, 2004 stressed that enhancing popular participation is essential to promote political stability; to bolster the rule of law; to strengthen respect for civil liberties, human rights and democratic principles. It emphasised that this orientation should be expressed in joint Arab action and its major organisational framework—the League of Arab States—through the establishment of a unified Arab Parliament. Under the urgent conditions endangering the Arab nation, the initiative called for a need to unite energies towards promoting the joint Arab action and activating its tools. It also stated that this role should not be restricted solely to executive power, by which it means that the judicial authority too should be involved, especially the legislative authority due to its important position within the state.

Thus, the initiative highlighted the necessity of maintaining this task at the regional level within the context of joint Arab action plan. Therefore, the idea of Arab Parliament—which was to be composed in accordance with a formula being refined, either through current Arab parliamentary councils, direct elections in the countries or both—became palpable. This initiative also emphasized that such a Parliament would have a significant capacity played in the Arab League, mainly through political supervision of the League institutions and coming with policies and general policies in various areas, and backed up with the tools and mechanisms and ways necessary to exercise their supervisory function (Ahmed Al-Rashidi, 2005, 114).

The creation of the Arab Parliament was part of the implementation of Resolution No. (256) adopted at the Tunis Summit on 23 May 2004 on the development of the system of joint Arab action. The Secretary-General of the League also held consultations on draft establishment of the Parliament with the President and the Secretary-General of the Arab Inter-

Parliamentary Union. On 27–28 July 2004 two working sessions produced a first draft of the charter, which was later discussed at a joint meeting of the political and legal committees of the Union, convened in Beirut on 2 September 2004. This meeting resulted in a draft for a Transitional Arab Parliamentary Union that they could agree upon

The latest step on this path was an invitation from the Council of the League, on the twenty-second regular session of the Council (held 14 September 2004), Resolution No. (2427) 14 September 2004 to hold a special ministerial session of the Council in January 2005 to review presented documents on the frameworks for developing and supplementing the League Charter. In fact, on 18 April 2004, the Secretary-General had already written to Arab Foreign Ministers enclosing the preliminary draft proposals for developing the League and amending its Charter prepared in their legal formulations drafts including: a draft setup; for an Arab Parliament.

The Arab Summit in Algiers then recommended the establishment of the Transitional Arab Parliament as a step to prepare for the establishment of permanent Arab Parliament. This embed was included among the decisions taken at the Algiers Summit on 23 March 2005 whereby an additional provision was added to the draft Charter amendments establishing a Transitional Arab Parliament, temporary functions and transitional period.

After several preparatory sessions, the inaugural session of the Transitional Arab Parliament commenced working within the framework of the Arab League headquarters in Cairo later the same year. Session reports and media coverage suggest their inaugural sessions were held on December 27 and 28, 2005, and that the official opening of the Parliament was December 27, 2005, just hours after the summit's decision to enact.

Based on the provisions of Articles 19 and 21 of the Charter of the League of Arab States, and in light of the Arab aspiration to develop and modernize the institutions and organs of the League, and with recognition of the importance of the principle of consultation (shura) and the expansion of popular participation as a gateway to democracy, and out of affirming the hopes of Arab peoples to strengthening the ties joining their body and their contribution to the establishment of an Arab order that is capable of achieving the ambitions of the Ummah in various areas of economic, social and political development on the basis of strengthening the rule of Law and enhancing the respect of Human Rights and leading all of this ultimately to comprehensive Arab Unity, and in implementation of resolution no. (256) of 2004 adopted in Tunis on the development of the Joint Arab Action System, and resolution no. (2479) issued on January 23, 2005 by the Council of the Arab League in the extraordinary session, Decide the following:

Formation of the Arab Transitional Parliament:

1. Article 1: A Transitional Arab Parliament will be set up on a renewable non-permanent basis for a maximum of up to 5 years to be renewed up to 2 years from the Holding of its first session. It will be a transitional stage leading to a permanent Arab Parliament. The Parliament shall be comprised of four representatives from each country of the member states of the League of Arab States, chosen from the national legislative councils of the countries, with due observance of the representation of women, and functioning in accordance with the Statute which shall be approved by the Parliament.

2. Financial Arrangements: The General Secretariat was tasked with preparing the financial mechanism needed for the Parliament to be established and to hand it over to the Council of the League at the ministerial level.

3. Convening the First Session: The Secretary-General will call for the Parliament to hold its session as soon as it is formed.

Parliament shall have a budget independent of government funding, funded equally by the member states and supplemented by other funds, with each state covering expenses for its own representatives.

Article 3 The headquarters of the Arab Parliament shall be in the city of Damascus — Syrian Arab Republic, and it acts to hold its meetings in any other Arab country, at the invitation of a member state and upon its decision. The Parliament was also responsible for establishing its own bylaws, creating its own bureau and committees, and enacting the charter on the Transitional Arab Parliament.

2nd — The Framework of the Unified Arab Parliament within the League of Arab States The Arab Parliament, under its institutional umbrella, works through a regulatory framework aimed at governing its activities, distributing its competences and maintaining the continuity of its sessions and decisions. The first structure is the General Assembly, which represents the highest authority within the Parliament. It was comprised of all the members in charge of representing the Arab states, where general debates would be held and where the Parliament's recommendations and decisions would be adopted. (<https://www.ar-pr.org/configuration.aspx>)

A. Bureau of the Parliament:

The Bureau is in charge of preparing the sessions and the agenda of the Parliament. This usually includes the Speaker of the Parliament, her deputies, as well as a rapporteur/Secretary-General. This body is the organizational leadership responsible for parliamentary affairs, communication between committees, and session scheduling.

B. Standing Committees:

The Arab Parliament based its work on standing and specialized committees to distribute political, economic, social and

legal portfolios among members and to "study issues referred to the Parliament in-depth before submission to the General Assembly". These include the most notable of these committees, namely: the Committee on Political Affairs, Foreign Relations and National Security; the Committee on Economic and Financial Affairs; the Committee on Social, Cultural Affairs, Women and Youth; and the Committee on Legislative and Legal Affairs and Human Rights.

C. General Secretariat of the Palace of the Parliament:

The General Secretariat is the administrative and technical arm of the Parliament. It is what is in responsible for preparing parliamentary sessions, organizing records and official documents, following up on the implementation of decisions and recommendations, managing official communications with the League of Arab States and with relevant regional and international organizations. (www.ar-pr.org)

Decisions of the Unified Arab Parliament

Page 14: In relation to decision-making mechanisms within the Parliament, a resolution and a recommendation are adopted based on voting procedures provided within the framework of its official meetings as well as through internal regulations. A draft recommendation is first deliberated by the appropriate specialized committees, and then offered for adoption by the General Assembly. As such there is a well ordered administrative progression between committees and plenary that organizes the work of the Parliament (<https://www.ar-pr.org>).

The inaugural parliamentary session was held at the headquarters of the League of Arab States in Cairo on 27 December 2005 following the establishment of the Transitional Arab Parliament in accordance with the decision of the 2005 Algiers Summit. During its interim period, the Parliament consisted of delegations from the members of the 21-state League of Arab States, of four members each per state (<http://www.aljazeera.net>).

The delegations represented the first-ever composition of the Transitional Arab Parliament which featured a number of high profile Arab parliamentarians. They included Mohammed Salem Al Mazrouei (UAE), Abdulrahman Ali Al Shamsi (UAE), Khalid Abdullah Al Naqbi (UAE), and Juma Saeed Al Muhairi (UAE). Diplomats Mostafa El-Feki, Ragaa Al-Arabi, and Sanaa Abdel Moneim Al-Banna with Saad El-Gamal from the Arab Republic of Egypt (Photo: REAL) Mohammed Jassem Al-Saqr, Abdulwahid Mahmoud Al-Awadi, Awad Bari Al-Enezi, and Waleed Khaled Al-Jeri represented the State of Kuwait. Representing the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia were Basim bin Ahmed Al Ibrahim, Mohammed bin Ibrahim Al-Hulwa, and Mohammed bin Abdullah Al-Ghamdi and Mansour bin Mahmoud Abdelghafar.

The Iraqi Republic was represented by Rasm Al-Awadi, Surtib Mohammed Hussein, Abbas Al-Bayati, and Mufid Al-Jazaeri. Attending from the Republic of Tunisia were Aida Merjan, Ammar AL-Makhloufi, Mohammed Al-Sobhi Boudarbala and Mohammed Al-Awini Nabih Berri, Bahia Hariri, Ibrahim Kanaan and Robert Iskandar Ghanem represented the Lebanese Republic. Tayseer Qubaa, Hanan Ashrawi, Rawhi Fattouh and Salim Al-Za'noun represented the State of Palestine.

Of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya: Ibrahim Abdulrahman Ajad, Ahmed Mohammed Ibrahim, Bashir Rajab Al-Tuweir and Huda Fathi Salem bin Amer. As for the representatives of Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, they are Tawfiq Kreishan, Taher Al-Masri, Mohammed Al-Halaika, and Nawal Al-Faouri. The Sultanate of Oman was represented by Saud bin Ahmed Al-Barwani, Saif bin Hashel Al-Maskari, Ali bin Saeed Al-Yahyaee and Fahd bin Majid Al-Maamari. Representatives of the Republic of Yemen included Ahmed Saeed Obaid Al-Sawil, Abdullah Ahmed Ghanem, Mansour Aziz Mahmoud and Ali Abdullah Abu Haliqa.

Samia Hassan Sayed Ahmed, Saleh Ahmed Al-Toum, Mohammed Al-Hassan Al-Amin and Yasser Jaafar Ibrahim represented the Republic of Sudan Representatives of the State of Qatar: Mubarak bin Ghanem Al Ali, Nasser bin Khalil Al-Jaida, Mohammed bin Abdullah Al-Attayah, Hamad bin Jassim bin Jassim Al Thani Abdelkader Bensalah, Fawzia Ben Badis, Mohammed Darragi, and Ammar Jilani were delegates from the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria. Ahmed Hussein Ibrahim Abbas, Alice Thomas Samaan, Abdulla Aziz Abdullah Al-Mousa, and Yousif Salih Al-Saleh from Kingdom of Bahrain.

Representatives of the Kingdom of Morocco include Tayeb Al-Misbahy, Abdelrahman Ladik, Mostafa Akacha and Abdelwahed Radi. The delegation of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania was composed of Mohammed Al-Hassan Ould El-Haj, Kane Hamidou Baba, Mokhtar Ould Mohammed Moussa and Nanna Bint Cheikhna. It represented the Republic of Djibouti, Idriss Arnaout Ali, Almi Faraj Faraj, Moumin Bahdon Farah, and Hassan Farah Mighir. From the Somali Republic, the participants were Ahmed Abdi Omar, Abdirashid Mohammed Abdi, Mohammed Omar Talha, and Nour Wabar Abdi. The Union of the Comoros — Al-Khidr Ali Mmadi, Ali Said Mohammed, Nour El-Dine Medlag and Youssef Madi Moussa. Last but not least, they were Mahmoud Al-Abrash, Nasser Qaddour, Ahmed Mahmoud Al-Shami, and Inam Taher Abbas, who represented the Syrian Arab Republic (<https://aletihad.ae/article/43200>)

However, membership in the Transitional Arab Parliament was not entirely stable throughout the period (2005–2011), as it underwent subsequent changes for various reasons. These changes were mainly related to the replacement or substitution of members in accordance with internal procedures within the national legislative councils of member states. Such changes are considered normal and are typically issued by the governments or parliaments of those states upon the expiration of membership terms, the death of a member, changes in national representation, or agreement on new representation. (<https://www.kuna.net.kw/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=1990479&language=en>)

At the opening of the first session, Mohammed Jassem Al-Saqr (Kuwait) was elected President of the Transitional Arab

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Parliament during an official session attended by the speakers of legislative councils and members of parliament. He assumed the presidency from the Parliament's inauguration on 27 December 2005 and remained in office until he announced his intention to resign in April 2009. The resignation procedures were completed on 26 April 2009. Al-Saqr is considered the first President of the Transitional Arab Parliament.

(<https://www.kuna.net.kw/ArticlePrintPage.aspx?id=1990479&language=en>)

Following the resignation of Mohammed Jassem Al-Saqr from the presidency of the Transitional Arab Parliament, the Libyan member Huda Ben Amer was elected President by acclamation, as no other members submitted candidacy for the position. The session for electing the new president was chaired by Counselor Ragaa Al-Arabi, the eldest member present, with a legal quorum achieved through the attendance of 59 members out of 88. Huda Ben Amer had previously served as Vice President of the Parliament before her election, and she expressed her satisfaction with the confidence of the members. Subsequently, Nasser Al-Maawali was elected Vice President by acclamation to replace her in the position.

Although the regulations of the Transitional Parliament stipulated that the transitional period would last five years (renewable for up to two additional years), changes in membership during this period resulted from internal parliamentary transitions and national legislative developments in participating states. In other cases, representatives were replaced due to changes in the composition of national parliaments, the expiration of parliamentary terms, or members' resignation. Such changes are common in multinational parliamentary institutions and do not constitute a violation of the governing statute of the Parliament. (<http://www.leagueofarabstates.net/>)

Table (1) A Table Showing the Key Representatives of the United Arab Emirates in the Parliamentary Terms of the Arab Parliament (2005–2011)

No.	First Term (2005–2009)	No.	Second Term (2009–2011)
1	Amal Abdullah Al Qubaisi	1	Obaid Ali Al Mehairi
2	Nidal Mohammed Al Teneiji	2	Nidal Mohammed Al Teneiji
3	Obaid Humaid Al Tayer	3	Ahmed Nasser Al Khatri
4	Abdulaziz Abdullah Al Ghurair	4	Hamad Harith Al Midfa

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on: "The Transitional Arab Parliament Approves the Draft Statute of the Permanent Parliament," Al-Dar News, 28 December 2009. <https://www.alkhaleej.ae/2009-12-28/>

Fourth: Functions of the Council

The functions of the Transitional Arab Parliament are varied, most important of them is the strengthening of the Arab relations in the frame of the Charter of the League of Arab States and the Arab agreements relevant to it. The document also deals with the issues related to supporting joint Arab action, expressing views and recommendations in this regard. The Parliament is also interested in Arab world challenges and development most importantly the economic and human sectors and Economic Integration. The Parliament also considers issues referred to it by the Council of the League at summit or ministerial level, or by the Secretary-General, and furnishes recommendations that may be invoked in relevant decisions. It is also responsible for reviewing draft multilateral agreements between the Arab states and that of establishing cooperative relations with international, regional and national unions and parliaments, in a way that is beneficial to the interests of the Arab nation and that establishes security and stability."

In addition to its rules of procedure, the Parliament is also responsible for approving its overall transitional budget and final accounts as well as reviewing and referring the League's annual budget. It also provides that "the ordinary sessions may not be less than twice a year, that its meetings are public unless otherwise provided, and that the guarantee of independence of its members." The headquarters of Parliament shall also be protected by immunities and privileges as per the agreement entered into with the country hosting them.) <http://www.leagueofarabstates.net/>).

Fifth: Tasks and achievements of the unified arab parliament during the period (2005-2011)

In 2005, the step taken in the development of the system of joint Arab action was that the

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League of Arab States approved the establishment of the Transitional Arab Parliament to be a body that represents the national parliaments in the Arab countries in order to add a popular dimension to the Arab decision-making process. Article 3 of the Transitional Arab Parliament statute determined the main tasks of the body to include the discussion of political, economic and social issues of concern to Arab States, working to promote Arab solidarity and submitting recommendations and proposals to the Council of the League of Arab States. This parliament was also intended to prepare to establish an Arab parliament for the Union of Arab Peoples, as well as to promote parliamentary diplomacy (United Nations Security Council, 2005, pp. 13-14).

The Transitional Arab Parliament started to perform real tasks in a participatory manner in 2006 and 2007 by convening repeated sessions and establishing a number of specialised committees to investigate matters submitted to it. These were the Political Affairs Committee, the Economic and Financial Affairs Committee, and the Legislative and Legal Affairs Committee. The committees helped in preparing reports and studies on Arab issues, and developed coordination among Arab national parliaments, and exchange of expertise. At this stage, the Parliament remained an advisory body, as its decisions and recommendations were non-binding on member states, thus limiting its capacity to directly influence joint Arab policies (Adel bin Abdulrahman Al-Asoumi, 2022, pp. 2-3).

Serious political actions were undertaken in 2008 during the year of the Transitional Arab Parliament, especially those resolving particular pivotal regional problems, and at the top of them the Palestinian issue. PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION On its part, the Parliament renewed its backing to the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, called for the establishment of independent Palestinian state with capital in East Jerusalem and stressed the need for the Arab stance to be unified on the

developments in the Palestinian territories. Although of great significance, in practice, the influence of these ranks was limited by the Advisory nature of the Parliament and its lack of executive power to implement its recommendations (Mohsen Saleh, 2008, p. 20).

In another resolution released in 2008, the Transitional Arab Parliament discussed the political and security situation in Iraq, reaffirming support for Iraq's holder and sovereignty and Ayed on national reconciliation efforts among Iraqi political forces. It emphasized on political stability, the reconstruction of state institutions and the promotion of national dialogue between all political actors. Nevertheless, these recommendations stayed under the umbrella of generic politics, failing to take to applicable operations, due to the necessity with the political will of Arab regimes under the scope of the league (Amr Moussa, 2008).

During 2009, the Transitional Arab Parliament continued its discussions on the economic challenges facing Arab states in particular, as the effects of the 2008 Global Financial Crisis, impacted many economies. Meanwhile, the Arab Parliament urged improving Arab economic cooperation and activating joint economic agreements and developing the Arab common market, and enhancing trade and investment among Arab countries. However, economic policies and weak coordination at the level of Arab states as well as difference were among the major hurdles facing the implementation of this and other proposals (Al-Jarida Newspaper, 2009).

In 2010, the Parliament concentrated its discussions on the future of Arab parliamentary work and means of developing it. A number of proposals were submitted to expand the powers of the Parliament and establish the Parliament more firmly in the joint Arab action system. The summit also highlighted the need to improve cooperation between Arab national parliaments, exchange of legislative experience, support political reform, and enhance participation of citizens in governance. This also played a role in instilling the foundations for the breeding of Arab parliamentary work in the years that followed (Ali Al- Daqbasi, 2010).

The political changes that fell upon the Arab region in 2011, especially the popular protests associated with the Arab Spring which went across many Arab countries, had a direct impact on the work of the Transitional Arab Parliament. Even the World Bank and UNDP reports attribute the broad causes of these uprisings to a mixture of youth unemployment, poor governance and limitations on political participation.

In the course of its sessions, the Parliament discussed these developments, stressing the need to achieve political reform and activate popular participation in the governance of the Arab countries, as well as the necessity for respecting human rights and public freedoms in the Arab countries, However, its influence over the direction of these events was short-lived, since each of its recommendations was non-binding on the member states. Consequently, it played a limited political role, which was manifested in articulating political positions generally and calling for dialogue and reform (Al Jazeera Net, 2011).

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arabe de la transition (2005-2011)

The United Arab Emirates contributed to the thought of the establishment of the Transitional Arab Parliament as early as the year 2001 as an extension of its national general approach in supporting the joint Arab action. There was a decisive role for the Federal National Council in stimulating this parliamentary establishment through effective participation in its courses and influencing the variables of Arab security and political policies. The first events of 2001 mark a period of time that cemented UAE institutions to light years away from the UAE which we know today and from a time when Arab parliamentary cooperation was in its infancy, a life that was born to die by his mother on the Arabian Peninsula (UAE). He also sent a written message to the Speaker of the Egyptian People's Assembly, Fathi Sorour, regarding the development of parliamentary cooperation and an invitation to participate in the meetings of the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union held in the country in February of that year. It shows that the UAE parliamentary activity has been present quite early in the Arab coordination frameworks, specifically through the League of Arab States and parliamentary unions, highlighting the second dimension of the UAE foreign policy that is characterized by its approach of parliamentary diplomacy (National Archives, 2001).

In 2002, UAE remained engaged with Arab Parliamentary Cooperation through the active participation of the Federal National Council in the Arab and regional parliamentary meetings, especially in the framework of the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union. Such an engagement helped enhance coordination among Arab parliaments, exchanging thoughts on how to promote the creation of mechanisms for better coordinating joint Arab action, including early initiatives for an Arab parliamentary bureau of Arab peoples within the League of Arab States (Al Ain News, 2017).

The UAE also remained engaged in the Arab dialogue over efficient joint Arab action in 2003, as the Federal National Council formed part of the UAE delegation taking part in particular parliamentary meetings, also aimed at legislative coordination and enhancing Arab parliamentary cooperation. At the same time, demands intensified among League of Arab States circles to develop Arab institutional systems towards reforming capacity mechanisms, consolidating the popular dimension in decision making, and legitimizing the idea of an Arab parliament that represents the Arab peoples and supports legislation in favor of joint Arab action (Al-Bayan Newspaper, 2003).

UAE involvement deepened in Arab efforts to reform the system of joint Arab action in 2004. And it also took part in meeting of parliaments to which the proposals at the level of leagues of states to develop the institutions of Arabs particularly a project to establish Arab Parliament. The UAE's engagement in such a role was indicative of her commitment to the

establishment of an institutional structure for Arab parliamentary work, that promotes the national parliaments to deal with political, economic, and social issues at the Arab level (Lebanese Parliament, 2005). A crucial step towards Arab parliamentary development was reached in 2005 with the approval of a resolution during the Arab Summit on the creation of a Transitional Arab Parliament as a representative body, and as part of the effort to activate the popular dimension of joint Arab action. As in this context, the United Arab Emirates through the Federal National Council, one of the institutions seeking to expand the involvement of Arab peoples in responsible joint dealing with common Arab issues and affairs within the system of the League of Arab States (Al Jazeera Net, 2005).

The year 2006 witnessed the coincidence of the UAE accession to the domain of Arab parliamentary work with the emergence of an important development in its own parliamentary experience. In December 2006, the first elections to the Federal National Council were held from 16–20 December — half of the Council members were elected. The step in this process of political empowerment and public participation was seen as a major milestone. UAE external parliamentary presence It was also reflected in the expanded external interest of the UAE as too in the presence of UAE in the Transitional Board of Higher International Assembly and overall Arab parliament meetings that discussed issues of double Arab cooperation and integration (Al-Bayan Newspaper, 2006). According to reports issued by the United Nations in 2007, Arab women were gaining greater access to political environments within parliamentary structures. Her Excellency Dr Amal Abdullah Al Qubaisi said that her recent recognition by the League of Arab States and the Transitional Arab Parliament, after winning a parliamentary seat through election on the occasion of International Women's Day marked a unique Arab achievement by being the first Gulf woman to win parliamentary ballot. Such outcome confirms a change in the nature of the parliamentary development process in the UAE: it is not only a stage confined within a national map, but rather an Arab map linked to the state policies dealing with political participation and the strengthening of the institutional role of women (National Archives, 2007). Speaking to the press after receiving her award in Cairo, Dr. Al Qubaisi commented the award is a reflection of how far the UAE has come on the path of democracy and the status of women rights in this country. It shows, therefore, how such event has been depicted in a political narration where the developmental domestic institution is connected with the regional reflection of the country in the Arab institutions (National Archives, 2007).

In 2007 as well, the Federal National Council strengthened its presence in Arab parliamentary work, through participation in meetings held by committees of the Transitional Arab Parliament at the headquarters of the League of Arab States in Cairo. In the preparatory coordination meetings ahead of parliamentary sessions, Dr. Obaid Ali Al Mehairi participated during the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Political Affairs and National Security. This reflects the UAE's desire to play a role in Arab parliamentary decision-making, especially in matters affecting national security and foreign policy (National Archives, 2007).

First in 2008 during the UAE participation enhanced to include social and cultural issues. The meeting of the Committee on Social, Cultural, Women and Youth Affairs at the headquarters of the League of Arab States in Cairo was also attended by Dr. Nidal Mohammed Al Teneiji. During the meeting, preparations for the Arab League Youth Forum 2008, including discussion on plans on how to best maximise the role of Arab and European youth in developing intercultural dialogue in the Arab world, were discussed. This suggests that engagement within UAE parliament was not strictly constricted to matters of politics, but extended to soft-power spheres like youth & cultural diplomacy as well. UAE involvement then continued in 2009 at the official parliamentary sessions level. The Federal National Council (FNC), headed by Hamad Harith Al Midfa, and Dr. Nidal Mohammed Al Teneiji a member of the Transitional Arab Parliament representing the UAE, attended the resumed first ordinary session of 2009 at the premises of the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States in Cairo. This indicates that UAE participation has turned into a consistent institutional attendance in the Arab parliaments.

In the same year, agenda items on issues of UAE sovereignty were officially incorporated into the agenda of the Transitional Arab Parliament. Meanwhile, the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Political Affairs and National Security today approved a draft resolution on the three islands of the UAE, Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, before its endorsement for a plenary session. Such activity illuminates the significance of parliamentary diplomacy in raising national concerns to the collective Arab level in a way which buttresses the UAE position on important regional issues of strategic sensitivity (National Archives, 2009).

UAE took part in the preparations for the resumed second ordinary session of the Arab Parliament in Cairo in 2010 which witnessed expanded participation UAE across political, economic and cultural committees. Dr Obaid Ali Al Mehairi, who chairs the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Political Affairs and National Security, said they would discuss Iran's occupation of the three UAE islands, the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories and the report from the UN fact-finding mission on the Gaza conflict (the Goldstone Report). This combines wider issues on Arab security with sovereignty issues – a reflection of the issues within UAE parliamentary diplomacy (National Archives, 2010). In the context of the League of Arab States, the Federal National Council also discussed joint Arab issues, within meetings of the Arab Parliament. This aligned with a recent milestone in the parliament experiences of the UAE, exemplified by the second Federal National Council elections in 2011 that were part of the political empowerment program to promote political participation and reinforce the legislative and oversight role of the Council (Al Ittihad Newspaper, 2012).

Conclusion

- Through its title, the study entitled “The Political Role of the United Arab Emirates in the Unified Arab Parliament established in 2005” aims to identify the topic and highlight its importance and its problematic, as well as to analyze the data and sources; thus the study reaches the following results:
- The Formation of the Transitional Arab Parliament marks an important step to reform the system of joint Arab action. It conveyed a rising recognition within Arab countries of the need to embed representative and supervisory elements in the framework of the League of Arab States. It was established as part of the larger reform process to modernise the Charter, develop decision-making mechanisms, and increase opportunities for public participation in line with regional and international changes and demands for contemporary governance.
- The Transitional Arab Parliament contributed during the transitional period (2005–2011) to the establishment of a clear institutional framework, by forming a bureau, specialized committees, the adoption of internal regulations, and the convening of regular sessions under its dome in order to discuss the major Arab concerns, such as the Palestinian cause, regional security, economic and social development, and Arab–regional dialogue. Nonetheless, its advisory competencies and the lack of compulsory executive powers limited its ability to indirectly affect the decision-making process of the League since its recommendations would be subject to the political willingness of member states.

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- In this context, it can be argued that the Transitional Arab Parliament, which was created in the context of the League of Arab States, was a reform-centric idea with great political and institutional importance in the evolution of joint Arab action. It had also helped in adding a parliamentary component to the Arab regional system and paved the way for a type of Arab states_ parliamentary diplomacy. While it offered an important forum for dialogue and discussion on political, economic, and social matters, it was restricted in impact by its functional mandate and by the absence of binding mechanisms for implementation.
- However, the involvement of at least some of the Arab states—especially the Emirates through the Federal National Council—became the most active model for backing this process. Proof of this was the continuing presence at parliamentary meetings and committees, the raising of national matters such as the issue of the three islands, as well as the support of topics related to the promotion of women and intercultural dialogue. Such a jumper demonstrates UAE's role in bolstering Arab parliamentary action through advancing its institutional mechanisms.
- So, the deepening of this experience into a more influential institution is conditional on enhancing its institutional powers and linking its outputs to clear mechanisms that ensure implementation. This would allow for an evolutionary transition away from a consultative mechanism towards a more functional role within the system of Arab joint action. The experience of the UAE, in this context, proves that the role played by the Arab Parliament in the regional system is not only connected to the institutional competencies of the Arab Parliament; it rather depends on the ability of the member states to activate this role and employ the political platform the Arab Parliament represents.

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Appendix (1)

Participating Countries in the First Session of the Transitional Arab Parliament (2006–2009)

No.	Country	Representative	Position in His/Her Country
1	United Arab Emirates	Mohammed Salem Al Mazrouei	Secretary-General of the Federal National Council
2	Egypt	Mostafa El-Feki	Member of the Egyptian People's Assembly
3	Kuwait	Mohammed Jassim Al-Saqr	Member of the Kuwaiti National Assembly
4	Saudi Arabia	Mohammed bin Ibrahim	Member of the Saudi Shura Council
5	Iraq	Abbas Al-Bayati	Member of the Iraqi Council of Representatives
6	Tunisia	Mohammed Al-Subhi	Member of the Tunisian Chamber of Deputies
7	Lebanon	Nabih Berri	Speaker of the Lebanese Parliament
8	Palestine	Rawhi Fattouh	Member of the Palestinian Legislative Council
9	Libya	Huda Ben Amer	Member of the Libyan General People's Congress
10	Jordan	Taher Al-Masri	Member of the Jordanian Senate
11	Oman	Ahmed Al-Barwani	Member of the Omani Shura Council
12	Yemen	Ahmed Saeed Obeid	Member of the Yemeni House of Representatives
13	Sudan	Samia Hassan Sayed Ahmed	Member of the Sudanese National Assembly
14	Qatar	Mohammed bin Abdullah Al-Attiyah	Member of the Qatari Shura Council
15	Algeria	Abdelkader Bensalah	Speaker of the Algerian Council of the Nation
16	Bahrain	Abdullah Al-Mousa	Member of the Bahraini Council of Representatives
17	Morocco	Abdelwahed Radi	Member of the Moroccan House of Representatives
18	Mauritania	Hamidou Baba	Member of the Mauritanian Parliament
19	Djibouti	Idris Arnaout	Member of the Djiboutian National Assembly
20	Somalia	Ahmed Abdi Omar	Member of the Somali Parliament
21	Comoros	Nour Eddine Madlaj	Member of the Comorian Parliament
22	Syria	Mahmoud Al-Abrash	Speaker of the Syrian People's Assembly

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Appendices : Appendix (2)

Participating Countries in the Second Session of the Arab Parliament (2009–2011)

No.	Country	Representative	Position in His/Her Country
1	United Arab Emirates	Dr. Obaid Ali Al Mehairi	Member of the Federal National Council
2	Egypt	Dr. Mostafa El-Feki	Member of the Egyptian People's Assembly
3	Kuwait	Mohammed Jassim Al-Sagr	Member of the Kuwaiti National Assembly
4	Saudi Arabia	Dr. Mohammed bin Ibrahim Al-Haloua	Member of the Saudi Shura Council
5	Iraq	Abbas Al-Bayati	Member of the Iraqi Council of Representatives
6	Tunisia	Mohammed Al-Subhi Boudarbala	Member of the Tunisian Chamber of Deputies
7	Lebanon	Robert Ghanem	Member of the Lebanese Parliament
8	Palestine	Rawhi Fattouh	Member of the Palestinian Legislative Council
9	Libya	Huda Ben Amer	Member of the General People's Congress
10	Jordan	Taher Al-Masri	Member of the Jordanian Senate
11	Oman	Saud bin Ahmed Al-Barwani	Member of the Omani Shura Council
12	Yemen	Abdulaziz Jubari	Member of the Yemeni House of Representatives
13	Sudan	Samia Hassan Sayed Ahmed	Member of the Sudanese National Assembly
14	Qatar	Mohammed bin Abdullah Al-Attiyah	Member of the Qatari Shura Council
15	Algeria	Abdelkader Samari	Member of the Algerian Council of the Nation
16	Bahrain	Abdulaziz Abdullah Al-Mousa	Member of the Bahraini Council of Representatives
17	Morocco	Al-Maati Benkaddour	Member of the Moroccan House of Councillors
18	Mauritania	Kan Hamidou Baba	Member of the Mauritanian Parliament
19	Djibouti	Idris Arnaout Ali	Member of the Djiboutian National Assembly
20	Somalia	Ahmed Abdi Omar	Member of the Somali Parliament
21	Comoros	Nour Eddine Madlaj	Member of the Comorian Parliament
22	Syria	Taysir Qalaa Awad	Member of the Syrian People's Assembly

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Appendix (3)



Mohammed Jassim Al-Saqr served as the first President of the Transitional Arab Parliament for the period from 27 December 2005 to 26 April 2009. He represented the Kuwait.

Appendix (4)



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Main Platform during the Opening of the First Session of the Transitional Arab Parliament, Cairo, 27–28 December 2005
Appendix (6)
The First Opening Session of the Transitional Arab Parliament at the Headquarters of the League of Arab States –
Cairo, 27–28 December 2005.



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