Egypt’s legal position on the use of force amid the current military escalation in the Region

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On 28 February, Egypt announced that it is closely following with deep concern the military escalation taking place in the region and warned that it could expand the scope of conflict, potentially pushing the region toward broader instability. In its statement, **Egypt condemned Iran’s targeting of several Arab states and reaffirmed its solidarity with them, including Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Jordan and Iraq. The statement emphasized the importance of respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of these states**, adhering to the principle of good neighbourliness, and exercising restraint in order to avoid further escalation that could affect regional and international peace and security. (Subsequent statements were issued along similar lines, see here, here, here, here, here, here, here and here)

Egypt has further issued several statements (see, e.g., here, here and here) condemning attacks against civilian facilities and energy and communication infrastructure, stating that such actions **constitute violations of state sovereignty and international humanitarian law, as well as breaches of the principles governing military operations.**

A further statement was issued on 9 March in which Egypt **condemned the targeting of civilian facilities and infrastructure, stating that such actions constituted a violation of international humanitarian law and a breach of the principles governing military operations.** This statement referred to Iran’s targeting of a residential complex in the city of Al-Kharj in Saudi Arabia.

In addition to these statements**, Egypt co-sponsored draft resolution (S/2026/155) presented on 11 March to the United Nations Security Council condemning Iran’s attacks** against Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Jordan, which constitute a breach of international law and a serious threat to international peace and security. The draft resolution further **reaffirms that the exercise of navigational rights and freedoms by merchant and commercial vessels, in accordance with international law, must be respected, particularly around critical maritime routes, and takes note of the right of Member States, in accordance with international law, to defend their vessels from attacks and provocations, including those that undermine navigational rights and freedoms. It condemns actions or**

threats by Iran aimed at closing, obstructing, or otherwise interfering with international navigation through the Strait of Hormuz, or threatening maritime security in the Bab Al Mandab and affirms that any attempt to impede lawful transit passage or freedom of navigation in these international waterways constitutes a serious threat to international peace and security; and calls upon Iran to refrain immediately from any actions or threats in accordance with international law.

This draft resolution was subsequently adopted as resolution 2817 by 13 votes in favour and 2 abstentions (Russia and China), after a Russian draft resolution (S/2026/159) failed to be adopted, receiving 4 votes in favour, 2 against and 9 abstentions (see S/PV.10119). The Russian proposal called for, without naming any party, an immediate cessation of hostilities, condemned attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure, emphasized compliance with international humanitarian law, and encouraged a return to negotiations and diplomatic engagement.

In parallel with these developments, the Minister of Foreign Affairs stressed, during the Fourth Joint Ministerial Meeting held virtually on 13 March between Egypt and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) States, that **the security of the Gulf States constitutes an integral part of Egyptian and Arab national security**. He also called for the activation of Arab collective security frameworks, including through the expedited **implementation of the 1950 Treaty of Joint Defence and Economic Cooperation of the League of Arab States, and the establishment of a joint Arab force capable of addressing threats facing Arab States.** The Minister further emphasized Egypt's rejection of the imposition of any regional security arrangements on Arab States by non-Arab regional actors or by parties from outside the region.

In the same context of the regional escalation, Egypt **condemned in several statements (e.g. here and here) the Israeli military operations against Lebanon**, including ground incursions and air strikes targeting Beirut and southern Lebanon describing it as **a flagrant violation of Lebanese sovereignty and territorial integrity** and as a conduct inconsistent with **the rules of international law and the Charter of the United Nations**. Egypt further stressed that the **deliberate destruction of infrastructure in Lebanon represents a blatant policy of collective punishment**, leading to the **forced displacement of approximately one million Lebanese people and the depopulation of entire areas**. The statement also warned against the **instrumentalization of humanitarian suffering and the worsening humanitarian crisis as a tool of military and political pressure**.

Egypt further called for the **immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces from all Lebanese territory** and stressed the need for **the full and non-selective implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) in all its elements**. It also called upon **the**

international community and the United Nations Security Council to assume their responsibilities, urging decisive action to **halt the escalation, ensure respect for international law, and prevent further deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation in the region**.

In a subsequent statement issued on 8 April, Egypt reiterated its condemnation in response to renewed Israeli airstrikes and raids across Lebanese territory one day after the US and Iran announced a ceasefire, which reportedly resulted in significant civilian casualties. It characterised these actions **as grave breaches of international law and international humanitarian law, emphasising in particular the unlawful targeting of civilian infrastructure as a serious infringement of legal protections afforded to civilians and non-military facilities, and an assault on Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity.** Egypt further stressed that such conduct undermines ongoing de-escalation efforts, including ceasefire understandings, and warned of the risk of further regional destabilisation, calling on influential international actors to intervene urgently to halt the escalation. (Subsequent statements condemning repeated attacks can be found here and here.)

On the other hand, no statements were documented regarding Egypt's position on the legality of the military strikes by the United States of America and Israel against Iran. However, in its statements on potential agreements between Iran and the United States, Egypt reiterated that any such agreements must be concluded with the parties respecting the prohibition of the use of force in settling disputes. (See here and here.)

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