

2017 Arab Court of Justice Docket

League of Arab States (represented by the Sultanate of Oman) v. Kingdom of Bahrain: Regarding the revocation of the citizenship of Bahraini Shi'a cleric Sheikh Isa Qassim

On June 21, 2016, Bahrain revoked the citizenship of a top Shi'a cleric, Sheikh Isa Qassim – in effect rendering him stateless – on the grounds that he was promoting “an extremist sectarian atmosphere and working to divide Bahraini society.” The move came shortly after the Bahraini government suspended the main Shi'a opposition group: the Wafaq National Islamic Society, for which Sheikh Qassim is allegedly the spiritual leader. The League of Arab States has brought suit against Bahrain, amid concerns that its actions violate accepted international law regarding citizenship.

QUESTIONS PRESENTED:

- (1) Whether Bahrain's revocation of Sheikh Isa Qassim's citizenship constitutes a violation of international law, particularly the Arab Charter on Human Rights.

League of Arab States (represented by Qatar) v. Union of the Comoros: Regarding the Comoros' failure to enforce international human trafficking protocols

Currently the Union of the Comoros does not have any offenses regarding trafficking in persons; however, in 2015, Comoros was downgraded from Tier 2 Watch List to Tier 3 in the State Department Trafficking in Persons Report. This is partly a result of the fact that, despite having an “interagency monitoring group” designed to implement the 2013 “anti-trafficking national action plan,” the Comorian government did not investigate or prosecute any traffickers, despite independent reports of significant levels of sex trafficking and forced labor.

QUESTIONS PRESENTED:

- (1) Whether Comoros' failure to actively combat human trafficking constitutes a violation of international law, including the Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam, as well as the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Lebanese Republic v. Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Regarding Saudi Arabian policy of executing foreign citizens for violations of religious law

In 2008 a Lebanese national, Ali Hussain Sibat, was arrested while performing the *umra* in Saudi Arabia. Based largely on his behavior as a television personality in Lebanon, Sibat was charged with and convicted of sorcery by the Saudi Arabian government, and sentenced to death by beheading. Following diplomatic pressure by Lebanon and other international organizations he was released in 2012. In the wake of his release, both the Lebanese and Saudi Arabian governments have agreed to ask the Arab Court of Justice for an advisory opinion regarding the Saudi Arabian practice of arresting and executing foreign participants for violations of Saudi Arabian law while outside of Saudi Arabia.

QUESTIONS PRESENTED:

- (1) Whether international law prohibits Saudi Arabia from considering the actions of foreign citizens outside of Saudi Arabian borders as grounds for prosecution in Saudi Arabian courts.
- (2) Whether Saudi Arabian prosecutions for “sorcery” are permissible under and rise to the standards of agreed-to conventions.

State of Palestine v. Kingdom of Jordan: Regarding Jordanian participation in Joint Military Exercises with Israel.

In November 2015, both Israeli and United States sources confirmed Jordanian military participation with Israeli IDF forces in joint military exercises. The Palestinian government has filed complaints over the Jordanian military’s participation. Claiming that it threatens her autonomy and independence – expressly recognized in the Charter of the League of Arab States – Palestine has demanded that Jordan cease any further military cooperation with Israel while it continues to occupy the State of Palestine.

QUESTIONS PRESENTED:

- (1) Whether Jordanian military or similar cooperation with Israel violates the League Charter, or other codified agreements regarding the status of occupied Palestinian territory.

United Arab Emirates v. Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Regarding the 1974 Treaty of Jeddah, the circumstances of its negotiation, and its contemporary applicability

In 1974, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates signed the Treaty of Jeddah regarding shared obligations vis à vis their shared border. Of particular import are Articles III and IV, which govern exploration and ownership of hydrocarbon resources in the border area. Though the treaty was signed by King Faisal and Sheikh Zayed in 1974, Saudi Arabia did not ratify the agreement until 1993, and the Emirates have yet to ratify, citing discrepancies in the negotiations, including coercion and inconsistencies in the oral agreement and legal text. The UAE has brought suit in attempt to formally nullify and renegotiate the Treaty.

QUESTIONS PRESENTED:

- (1) Whether the Treaty of Jeddah is enforceable without ratification from the United Arab Emirates, or approval from its Federal National Council.
- (2) Whether the lack of involvement of Qatar in the negotiations affects the legality of the Treaty.