

Plans for Arab joint intervention force

Arab League member nations have formally announced an agreement to create a joint military force – marking a new determination among Saudi Arabia, Egypt and their allies to intervene in regional hotspots

HOW JOINT FORCE WILL WORK

Proposed force composed of up to 40,000 elite troops – backed by fighter jets, warships and light armour – headquartered in Cairo or Riyadh. Full proposal to be presented to Arab League Joint Defence Council within four months

PRECEDENT

Creation of force has been longtime goal that has eluded Arab nations in 65 years since they signed rarely-used joint defence pact. Gulf nations joined forces to help Bahrain's Sunni monarchy quash Arab Spring protests in 2011 by its Shiite majority



DEPLOYMENT IN YEMEN

Force could take months to come together – too long for it to play meaningful role in Yemeni crisis. However, current Saudi-led coalition conducting airstrikes against Shiite rebels in Yemen could serve as template for future deployment

REPRESENTATION

Force may not include all 22 Arab League members as joining will likely be optional. Saudi Arabia and Egypt seen as biggest contributors. Could be deployed against radical Sunni groups like Al Qaeda and Islamic State and to counter ambitions of Shiite Iran

