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[Launch of Charter on Engagement with the League of Arab States](#)

The Centre for Law and Democracy (CLD) (Canada), Transparency Maroc (TM), Palestinian Center for Development and Media Freedoms (MADA) and Maharat Foundation (Lebanon) launched the Charter for Improving Civil Society Engagement with the League of Arab States today, ahead of the 31 March 2019 Arab League Summit being held in Tunis. The Charter sets out minimum standards for what the League of Arab States (LAS) needs to do to improve its engagement practices with civil society and other stakeholders.

In September 2018, the four organisations published a report on [Improving Civil Society Engagement at the League of Arab States](#) which highlights how far behind other inter-governmental organisations (IGOs) – including regional bodies like the [Council of Europe](#) and [Organization of American States](#) – the LAS is in terms of engaging with civil society. The Charter, which was finalised after several rounds of consultation and discussion, sets out standards and processes for improving LAS engagement, organised under three main headings.

As a first step, the Charter calls on the LAS to “conduct an open and inclusive process of consultation with civil society with a view to putting in place a new framework for engagement”, providing some minimum conditions for this, including that the process should be transparent, collaborative and genuine in the sense that the LAS commits to real change at the outset. Second, the Charter calls on the LAS to “adopt a dedicated information disclosure policy”, in line with international standards, leading to a substantial improvement in the disclosure of information by the League. Finally, the Charter calls on the LAS to put in place a number of short-term measures to improve engagement, given that the deeper reform process is likely to take some time. These include transforming the current system of accrediting “observers” into one which allows civil society to be given consultative status (i.e. with the right to speak as well as observe) and putting in place other engagement systems, including *ad hoc* accreditation to attend meetings.

The Charter is available in English and Arabic at: <https://www.law-democracy.org/live/launch-of-charter-on-engagement-with-the-league-of-arab-states/>.

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