

## Legal Dimensions of the Nile Water Issue

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**T**he issue of the Nile water occupies a central position in the Egyptian national security system according to various historical, political, geo-strategic and hydraulic considerations. This stems from the pivotal role of the River Nile in the Egyptian civilization, as the non-existence of any country related to a river as Egypt. In the recent years, the issue of the River Nile water had imposed its existence on the Egyptian and Nile Basin agendas due to various considerations; including the aggravation of the water scarcity problem, the signing of some Basin States, solely, the Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA) known as Entebbe, in 2010, then the accession of other countries to this agreement lately. In addition to Ethiopia's building of the Renaissance Dam that began despite the frequent technical reports over the environmental and technical damages of this dam.

All such considerations had a great deal to do with the Nile water issue, besides the regional and international context of the developments in the Nile Basin region such as the secession of South Sudan, and the endeavors of most of the Nile Basin States to adopt a developmental vision that sometimes differs from that of the Egyptian. Additionally, the change in the patterns of balances and interactions among all Basin States and their relations with the international powers, not to mention the predominance of the roles played by China, Turkey and Iran in the continent, had all put the Nile water issue in a different regional and international context, thus imposing a qualitative challenge on the Egyptian decision makers towards such changes.

Stemming from the Egyptian historical and legal constants concerning Egypt's right to the Nile water which has a legal basis in the rules of international law; including the principle of succession or international inheritance, non-injury, river environment protection prior notification, and the international commitment to evaluate the environmental effect of the water projects, have all put the study of the legal dimensions of the Nile water issue, besides other dimensions, in its right position on the Egyptian agenda. It is worthy to note that the Egyptian foreign policy upon June 30 regards the Nile water

issue one of the main pillars of diplomatic move during the coming period. Thereupon, the new issue of "African Perspectives" is prospecting that dimension through discussing the following issues:

- **The legal value of the Nile River conventions.**
- Dispute settlement on International river uses.
- Equitable utilization of international rivers.
- Legal commitments regulating the establishment of water projects on international rivers.
- The principle of fundamental change in circumstances and its impact on the Nile basin agreements.
- A study on the concept of International River in international water law.
- Water cooperation in the Nile basin.

In this respect, it is noteworthy to mention that, in this pivotal stage and within the framework of its national role, the State Information Service (SIS) puts Egypt's strategic issues, on top of which is that of the Nile water, in a suitable position on the media and scientific levels. This

should take place through prospecting a future vision for such issues, whether through the SIS efforts on both the domestic and foreign levels, or through cooperation with the state institutions. This cooperation is embodied in this issue of "African Perspectives" between the SIS and the "the Centre of Judicial Studies and Research of the State Council " in a scientific attempt to build a pattern for integration and cooperation between the Egyptian State Institutions.

Finally, I would like to reiterate on the importance of the African dimension in the coming phase to the SIS which I am honoured to preside in light of the repercussions of June 30 that necessitate rebuilding the structures of the Egyptian State institutions. In this respect, the SIS resumes its information and developmental message through its various scientific publications, on top of which is the "African Perspectives" periodical, besides activating the role of the SIS media offices in the African continent which is currently witnessing the inauguration of new offices, thus coping with the challenges and aspirations of this phase.