

Syria's Assad tells Arab leaders to take 'historic opportunity' to remake Middle East

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has spoken of an "historic opportunity" for Arab states to remake their region "with the least amount of foreign interference", in his first trip to an Arab League summit in over a decade.

He said Arab leaders should build on the reconciliation ahead of the summit.

Syria had been suspended from the group at the start of its civil war in 2011.

It was readmitted after states which had backed the opposition accepted Mr Assad's grip on power was secure.

"I hope that it marks the beginning of a new phase of Arab action for solidarity among us, for peace in our region, development and prosperity instead of war and destruction," he told delegates.

"Today is an historic opportunity to rearrange our affairs with the least amount of foreign interference," he added.

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