

# Saudi Arabia in Focus

The monthly update from the Saudi mission to the European Union



April 2017 – No. 12

In this issue

- > The Kingdom pledges a further €138m to support our Yemeni brothers
- > Saudi Arabia stands firm on Syria
- > Closer Saudi-US ties in the fight against terrorism
- > Saudi women in the spotlight
- > Vision 2030 progress

## From the ambassador

In a month where both Europe and the Middle East have both been beset by terror – in Paris, Sweden and Egypt – we look at how Saudi Arabia is forging even stronger ties with the US and its international allies in order to stamp out terrorism.

The deteriorating situation in Yemen this month led members of the international community to come together to pledge further funds for the war-torn country, where Houthi forces continue to hamper aid efforts and threaten the lives of Saudi citizens with cross-border attacks.

Finally, to mark the Kingdom's accession to the United Nations Committee for women's rights, we profile two leading Saudi women, whose exceptional work makes them stand out in the world of natural science and the arts.



**Abdulrahman S. Alahmed**

Ambassador and Head of the Mission to the European Union

## Saudi Arabia pledges €138 million to support Yemen



**A family from the marginalized community (Mohamasheen) having lunch. Sana'a, Yemen, November 2015** Photo Credit: Sami Shamsan

At a high-level international pledging conference for Yemen in Geneva on 25 April, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia pledged a further \$150 million (€138 million) towards the \$2.1 billion (€1.9 billion) target for the war-torn country. The World Food Organization and the UNICEF renewed the call for pledges as, so far this year, Yemen has received only 15 percent of the funds required.

Saudi Arabia is committed to finding a political solution to the crisis in Yemen and securing the best outcome for the country's population. The Kingdom's humanitarian relief projects are driven by the King Salman Humanitarian Aid & Relief Centre, (KSRelief).

Since its inception in 2015, KSRelief has spared no effort to assist those in need across all Yemeni governorates, and has provided aid worth around €548 million to some 26 million Yemeni civilians.

The organisation has been able to reach all regions of the country, irrespective of who is in control, and

works equally in the north and the south. KSRelief's work demonstrates impartiality and complies with international humanitarian law.

During a visit to KSRelief in February UN chief Antonio Guterres said he was "very encouraged to see the centre developing its activities, with a strong commitment to humanitarian principles, not only in Syria and Yemen, but in so many countries around the world." At this latest conference, he urged countries to pitch in to help prevent a looming famine in the war-torn country, warning that children especially were already dying at an alarming rate. "Yemen today is experiencing a tragedy of immense proportions," the UN Secretary General told country representatives. Appealing to donors, he stressed that "a famine can be prevented if we act quickly and commit to funding crucial life-saving assistance".

The conference, co-hosted by the Swiss and Swedish foreign ministers, comes after the UN in February said Yemen needed \$2.1 billion of aid this year alone.



+32-2649-2044  
[www.ksamissioneu.net](http://www.ksamissioneu.net) - @ksamissioneu  
[contact@ksamissioneu.net](mailto:contact@ksamissioneu.net)

# Saudi Arabia maintains its strong stance advocating a peaceful Syria without Assad



Saudi Foreign Minister H.E. Adel Al-Jubeir meets his Russian Counterpart Sergei Lavrov

**Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir discussed Syria's future with his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov in Moscow on 26 April, after which he said Riyadh still believed there was no political future for President Bashar al-Assad**

After talks with the Russian Foreign Minister, Al-Jubeir said that he wants to end Iran's meddling in the Middle East. The Saudi minister gave a positive assessment of Russian-backed Syrian peace talks in Kazakhstan, but said he thought there was no need to widen the list of participants in those talks, which are sponsored by Iran, Turkey and Russia. He added that there are no insurmountable differences between Moscow and Riyadh when it came to finding a solution to the Syria crisis.

Earlier this month, Saudi Arabia stressed its firm stance in preserving unity in Syria and maintaining security and peace. The Kingdom expressed the hope that the conventions endorsed by the international resolutions for a ceasefire, delivery of humanitarian aid, and release of detainees are implemented.

Head of the Saudi Mission to the EU H.E. Abdurrahman bin Sulaiman Al-Ahmad gave a speech at the Brussels Conference on the Future of Syria and the Region, which was held on 5 April with the presence of representatives from more than 79 countries.

"The Kingdom has long sought to find peaceful solutions to the Syrian crisis since its inception and worked with the brotherly and friendly states to avoid a human tragedy. In this regard and on the basis of an international mandate, the spectrum of the Syrian opposition were invited to the Riyadh Conference during 8-10, December, 2015. This conference led to establishment of the supreme negotiations commission for the Syrian opposition forces and revolution. This commission was regionally and internationally welcomed at the time," he said.

The ambassador added that Saudi Arabia renews its support for the efforts of UN Secretary-General's envoy Stephan de Mistura to find a peaceful political solution to the Syrian crisis without President Bashar Assad.



# Closer US-Saudi ties in the fight against Terror



Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz with Brett McGurk, the US president's envoy for the global coalition to counter ISIS, 26 April 2017

**As a founding member of the Global Coalition to Counter Daesh, Saudi Arabia reiterated its commitment to defeat the terrorist network, at the recent ministerial meeting of the Coalition in Washington, DC.**

In its first two months, the Trump administration has had several high-level contacts with Saudi leaders, signalling a U.S. desire for a closer Saudi partnership. Already, Saudi Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz has met with Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis at the Pentagon to review progress in the bilateral defense relationship, including the two nations' efforts to confront the most pressing security challenges to the region, such as Iran's destabilizing regional activities and the ongoing campaign to defeat Daesh and other terrorist organizations.

Equally, Saudi Foreign Minister Adel bin Ahmed Al Jubeir met with U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson. The Foreign Minister remarked, "I believe that no two countries are working as closely in fighting terrorism, and in particular ISIS, as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United States. This has been the case for a number of years. We are intensifying our efforts. The conference that the Secretary hosted in Washington was a huge

success and reinforced the determination of the civilized world to take on this evil and to defeat it, God willing."

On 26 April Saudi Minister of Defence Prince Mohammed bin Salman met with Brett McGurk, the US president's envoy for the global coalition to counter ISIS. During the meeting, they reviewed the latest developments in the Middle East, including the fight against ISIS terrorist organization and international efforts to ensure the region's security and stability.

Saudi fighter aircraft have carried out 341 strikes since the beginning of the international campaign against Daesh, and all of them were directed against Daesh targets in Syria. These 341 strikes mean that the Kingdom has flown the second largest number of sorties over Syria, after the United States.

Former U.S. Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad attributed the Kingdom's robust counterterrorism efforts to leadership from the royal family. "The Saudi king and his son, the deputy crown prince, have stated clearly that they regard Sunni Islamist extremism as a threat to themselves," Khalilzad said. "They are embracing modernization and seeking to distance from the extremist groups."



# Spotlight on Saudi Women



Ground-breaking physician, Dr Khawla al-Khuraya

Saudi Arabia was this month elected to the UN Committee for Women's Rights. In celebration of this significant milestone and the ongoing societal reforms taking place in Saudi Arabia, we profile two Saudi women who continue to lead the way for others.

**Khawla Al-Khuraya** is the first woman to receive the King Abdulaziz Award for Excellence for her work in the field of cancer research. The physician and pathology professor was the first to

identify the cancer-triggering FOSM1 gene in the human body, which prompts the formation of cancer cells. In doing so, she raised awareness on the importance of testing and taking precautionary health measures.

Besides her ground-breaking work at the King Faysal Specialist Hospital and Research Center, al-Khuraya fulfills her role as a member of the Shura Council, Saudi Arabia's highest consultative body.



**Haifa al-Mansour** has been chasing her cinematic ambitions for years and first achieved recognition as a talented film director five years ago.

Her debut feature film *Wadjda* made its world premiere at the 2012 Venice Film Festival. It was the first full-length feature to be shot entirely in Saudi Arabia and the first-ever Saudi film to be submitted to the Oscars.

The film was selected as the Saudi Arabian entry for the Best Foreign Language Film at the 86th Academy Awards, but unfortunately was not nominated. It did, however, earn a nomination for Best Foreign Film at the 2014 BAFTA Awards.

## They said...

>> "Arab security is faced with unprecedented threats, internally and externally in light of many regional and global events. This requires us to strengthen security cooperation and integration between our countries to defeat demons of the earth, terrorists, criminals, promoters of drugs and outlaws."

Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia  
Mohammed bin Naif bin Abdulaziz

## In Brief

### Jordanian envoy to Saudi Arabia hails Vision 2030

Bassem Awadallah, the Jordanian king's special envoy to Saudi Arabia, discussed Jordanian-Saudi ties and commended Saudi Vision 2030 and its positive effects on the economy of Arab countries.

Awadallah said Jordanian-Saudi relations are strong, strategic and historical, adding that Jordan believes Saudi Arabia is one of its most important allies.

Commenting on Saudi Vision 2030, Awadallah said it's considered the strongest and most comprehensive reform project on the level of the region and the entire world, adding that implementing this vision will positively affect Arab economies.

### Bright renewable future for the Kingdom

Saudi Arabia possesses all the favourable conditions for growth in its renewable energy sector, according to Moody's Investors Service, abundant solar resources, land availability, an A-rated sovereign credit and strong economic & strategic logic are all in place to support the renewable energy drive, an important element of the Vision 2030 economic roadmap. The plan foresees a pivot to clean energy as a human, moral and religious obligation.

