

EMBASSY MARKS INDEPENDENCE DAY OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Qatar, Bosnia and Herzegovina both advocate for peace, world order: Envoy

QT INTERVIEW
ALYNN AGONIA
DOHA

AMBASSADOR OF Bosnia and Herzegovina to Qatar HE Tarik Sadović underscored the excellent relations between Qatar and his country particularly in political and diplomatic fields.

In an interview with Qatar Tribune on the occasion of the celebration of Independence Day of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ambassador Sadović said that both countries share strategic interests in preserving peace and stability.

"Qatar and Bosnia and Herzegovina are two friendly countries among which there are no open questions. Our people are excellent, but economic relations are not at a similar level. Bosnia and Herzegovina and Qatar are two small countries, both located in the historically troubled regions of the Balkans and the Gulf. Our neighbours did not always have friendly intentions and respect for the sovereignty of our states. That is why the strategic interests of both our countries are to preserve peace, stability and security, advocating a world order based on the principles of international law and respect for human rights and free-

dom. The foreign policy goal of Bosnia and Herzegovina is membership in NATO and European Union. We assume that Qatar's membership in the GCC is still an important foreign policy goal for the country," the ambassador elaborated.

Commenting on the current situation in the region and the efforts of Qatar to forge new partnerships with some countries, Ambassador Sadović reiterated Bosnia and Herzegovina's interest to be a "friend and a reliable business partner to Qatar".

The ambassador underlined Qatar's role in rebuilding Bosnia and Herzegovina as a result of the armed conflict that took place in the country. He expressed appreciation to the help and affection shown by the leadership of Qatar to his country and the nationals.

Sadović also said the visit of the Emir of Qatar HH Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al Thani to Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2016 marked a milestone in the relations of both countries that led to transitioning their ties to economic cooperation - after a phase in which Bosnia and Herzegovina only received assistance from Qatar.

"The important visit led to the signing of various agreements including on economic and trade cooperation, an investment protection agreement and a double taxation avoidance agreement," he said. An agreement on regulating the employment of Bosnia and Herzegovina citizens in Qatar and a memorandum of understanding in the field of security was also signed, the



Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Qatar HE Tarik Sadović.

ambassador added. Sadović also hailed the recent high-level delegation visit from Bosnia and Herzegovina to Qatar headed by the country's Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina Dr Denis Zvizdic as another turning point in the relations of the two countries that resulted in advancing the economic cooperation and kicking off investments between them in energy, tour-

ism, agriculture, wood and metal industry and infrastructure development.

"Specific projects that are ready for investments were offered, and the leaders of Qatar's institutions promised that they would soon visit our country for a review. During the visit, three MoUs were signed in the areas of health, education and youth co-operation. The cities of Sarajevo and Doha have confirmed their brotherly ties by signing a special agreement on town twinning," Ambassador Sadović added.

He also noted the rise in Qatari investments in Bosnia and Herzegovina particularly in real estate in the past three years. Currently, Qatar has established over 100 companies in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Most of these were established for the express purposes of acquiring real estate, but have at the same time opened up other business opportunities. In addition to the trend of rising Qatari investments in the real estate sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina, interest in agriculture is also on the rise, he added.

"Also, our government expects the 50 million-dollar Qatar Friendship Fund for stimulating the employment of young people to become operational soon," Sadović said, adding that the launch of Qatar Airways flights from Doha to Sarajevo has helped in furthering the cooperation.

"The most successful Qatari project in our country is the establishment of the regional TV network Al Jazeera Balkans, which with its 250 employees has become

"We truly regret that the Arab brothers are fighting among themselves. That certainly is not in their best interest. On the other hand, we understand the situation and that the blockade that has been imposed on Qatar has forced it to seek new trade routes and new business partners. Bosnia and Herzegovina stands ready to be a friend and a reliable business partner. Of course, we call upon the Arab brothers to open a dialogue and peacefully with mutual respect for one another resolve their differences. It's far better than having someone else do this for them"

- Ambassador HE Tarik Sadović on the Gulf crisis

a regional success story. Not far from the town of Bugojno, the Qatari investors are now building a multi-purpose sports and recreation centre."

On March 1, Bosnia and Herzegovina marks its Independence Day. On the occasion, the ambassador extended his congratulations to the citizens currently residing in Qatar which to date is 750 and is expected to increase in the coming years.

"Twenty-six years ago, on February 29 and March 1 of 1992, the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina declared in a referendum that they wanted to live in an independent and sovereign state, which was soon recognised by the international community. That is why the 1st of March was declared a holiday. That is why I avail myself of this opportunity to congratulate our citizens in Qatar this holiday - the Independence Day of Bosnia and Herzegovina," he said.

Emir, SA president hold phone talks

THE Emir His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al Thani held a telephone conversation with President Cyril Ramaphosa of the Republic of South Africa, on the occasion of his election as President of the Republic, wishing him

every success. The two sides also reviewed bilateral relations and means of boosting them. (QNA)



EMIR SENDS WRITTEN MESSAGE TO SUDAN'S PRESIDENT. The Emir His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al Thani on Wednesday sent a written message to President Sudan Omar al Bashir pertaining to bilateral relations and means of boosting them. Ambassador of Qatar to Sudan HE Rashid bin Abdulrahman al Nuaimi delivered the message during a meeting with the president of Sudan at the presidential palace in Khartoum on Wednesday. (QNA)

Cabinet regrets US decision to move its embassy to Al Quds in mid-May

QNA
DOHA

THE Cabinet at its weekly meeting chaired by Prime Minister and Minister of Interior HE Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa al Thani at the Emir Diwan on Wednesday expressed regret over the United States' intention to move its embassy to occupied Al Quds in mid-May and hoped that the United States will reverse its decision.

The Cabinet also stressed its rejection of the US move, saying it was contradictory to international law and UN Security Council and General Assembly resolutions related to the Palestinian issue.

The Cabinet added that such a move will heighten tension in the region, impede peace talks and prevent any fair and comprehensive resolution of the issue acknowledging the rights of the Palestinian people to have an

independent state with East Al Quds as its capital.

Minister of Justice and Acting Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs HE Dr Hassan bin Lahdan al Hassan al Mohannadi discussed the details of the meeting.

The Cabinet also denounced the Syrian regime's continued attack on Eastern Ghouta, in clear violation of UN Security Council resolution no 2401 issued last Saturday unanimously.

The Cabinet called on the international community to stop the humanitarian crisis perpetrated by the Syrian regime against the innocent civilians in utter violation of the international law and the UN Security Council resolutions.

Furthermore, the Cabinet approved its draft decision to amend the organisation of some of the administrative units of the Ministry of Economy and Commerce and delegating their duties.

The Cabinet also approved the draft decision of the Minister of Economy and Commerce to amend certain provisions of Decree No 134 of 2017 to establish sections in MEC's administrative units and delegate tasks to them.

The Cabinet then approved a draft memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in Qatar and the Ministry of Higher Education of Oman to cooperate in the fields of sciences and higher education.

The Cabinet also approved draft MoUs between the governments of Qatar and the Republic of Rwanda to cooperate in the cultural and sports fields.

The Cabinet approved the draft fourth executive programme for the media agreement between the governments of Qatar and the Kingdom of Mexico for the years 2018, 2019 and 2020. The Cabinet approved

joining the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) as a dialogue partner. The SCO is an intergovernmental, political, economic and security organisation.

One of the aims of the organisation is promoting mutual trust and good neighbourliness among member states. It also aims to promote effective cooperation in the fields of politics, trade, economy, technology research, culture, education, energy, transport, tourism, environmental protection and other fields.

The Cabinet reviewed the report on the work of National Civil Aviation Security Committee from July 1, 2016, to December 31, 2017, and took the necessary measures.

The Cabinet praised the work of the committee and the Qatar Civil Aviation Authority and its efforts in the field of civil aviation security, according to the information in the report.

Enjoy Xtreme Sports Fest in Qatar

LLEWELLYN FLORES
DOHA

FOUR and One inaugurated the first edition of two events - Xtreme Sports Festival (XSF) and Kids & Schools Eduainment Festivals (KSEF) in Doha on Wednesday.

The events will run until March 3.

The events were organised by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education Pri-

ivate Schools Licensing Department Director Hamad al Ghali, Raya Services founder and event partner Yousef al Jassim, Australian businessman Michael Ibrahim, Aqeeq Holdings Regional Director Shahid Khan, Food Festival representatives Shama al Dossari, Aisha al Tamimi, Four and One Chairman Omran al Sherawi and Chief Executive Officer Fernando De Guama.

The XSF saw young riders from all over the world competing in the opening heats of their discipline that included BMX, skateboarding, roller blading, wakeboarding and general free style manoeuvres.

Sherawi said, "Xtreme Sports are becoming more popular in Qatar and the following ownership is increasing at an encouraging rate. Four and One is proud to organise the

first edition of the festival, which is aimed at boosting the sport in Qatar."

More than 35 exhibitors are participating in the KSEF, providing children different forms of edutainment, including storytelling and poetry readings, cooking demos, art workshops, panel discussions, hands-on projects for kids and street theatre.

The four-day event is open from 3pm to 11pm.



Officials at the inaugural of XSF and KSEF in Doha on Wednesday. (JALAL PATHIVOOR)

Iran shares the Arabs' concern over Zionism: Expert

MALEK HELALI
DOHA

IRAN is an important player in the region and has a historical role in its past and present, according to Shafiq Ghabra, Professor of Political Science at Kuwait University.

Ghabra noted that while Iran shares the Arabs' concern over Zionism and other issues, it has overplayed its secular approach and has consequently lost the support of populations it could have gained otherwise.

This came during a talk hosted by Brookings Doha Center on Monday to discuss the policies and state of affairs in and around Iran in 2018 and to address the current status of Iran amid its external and internal challenges. The panel discussion was moderated by Ali Fathollah-Nejad, visiting fellow at the Brookings Doha Center, and was attended by members of Doha's diplomatic, academic



Experts at a panel discussion hosted by Brookings Doha Center on Monday. (JALAL PATHIVOOR)

and media communities.

According to the Head of the Centre for International Research and Education Seyed Mohammad Kazem Sajjadpour, Iran supports regional dialogue and promotes an

interconnective security network ensuring the interest and strength of the region.

Additionally, Sajjadpour affirmed that Iran proved by words and action its commitment to its bi-

lateral relations during the GCC crisis given its support for Qatar.

Ghabra continued: "Iran should start looking for friends and partners instead of followers having their internal policies decided in Tehran

such as the case with Iraq." He also noted that Iran could have been wiser in dealing with the issue of ISIS through policies against the marginalization of Sunnis.

Commenting on the Syrian issue, Ghabra said that the Syrian rebellion started off as young and peaceful while the Syrian regime was very brutal from the beginning and Iranians were aware of its brutality.

However, Ghabra emphasised that he still does not believe that Arabs should consider Zionists allies against Iran which is neither an enemy nor a colonial state. He stated that Iran cannot be blamed for all the issues in the region, but it also should not constantly victimise itself.

In fact, according to Sajjadpour, the notions promoting Iran as a threat are dangerous and have contributed to the war against it. He added that Iran is a builder in the region and has been providing security to its neighbours.

Furthermore, Sajjadpour emphasised Iran's position that opposes hegemony and noted that Iran's intervention in Syria was purely defensive since external players intervened.

On the other hand, Professor at Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Policy Hooshang Amirahmadi argued that Iran's foreign policy as declared by its own constitution is fundamentally interventionist as it affirms the theocracy's responsibility in supporting the victimised Islamic groups globally. He added: "Iran is a power that is expected to play its role differently in the region by making allies instead of enemies."

In conclusion, Ghabra noted that Iran's intervention in other countries will be counteractive and that the nuclear deal is a brilliant one that should continue as it serves the interest of the region. According to him, Iran also needs to change its perspective of Arabs and should have them on its side.