

46th National Day of the United Arab Emirates

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT



Commemorating 46th National Day of UAE

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THE United Arab Emirates commemorates its 46th National Day on December 2nd, a day that embodies the Spirit of the Union and celebrates 45 years of great achievements since the federation was established in 1971.

The path of celebration was first announced by the founding President of the UAE, the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, and his fellow founding fathers of the UAE Federation. This path is now followed by His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE, who continues to lead the nation's march to progress and prosperity.

The incredible achievements of the UAE in recent years have been made possible due to the directives of President His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, and His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, as well as His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, and their fellow members of the Supreme Council and Rulers of the Emirates, who have consistently contributed to promoting and developing the country through knowledge and innovation. The UAE today ranks among the world's leading destinations across several key indicators and has become a true role model for countries around the world.

The country enjoys a prestigious position in the Arab world, and beyond, due to its significant achievements in various fields and its strong presence in political, diplomatic, economic and humanitarian arenas at regional and international levels. The UAE has always been dynamic and proactive in communicating with other countries and building bridges of close cooperation and strategic partnerships to lead the way in political, economic, commercial, industrial, technological, scientific, educational, health and other sectors.

FOREIGN POLICY

Since the Union was founded, the UAE political leadership has recognised that for the young and evolving Union to endure internal and external challenges to mature into a viable state, they needed a skillful, dynamic management of diplomatic relations with other countries.

With his wisdom and insight, the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the founding father and first president, was able to set out firm principles for a moderate, balanced foreign policy which still guides the UAE's energetic diplomacy today under the able leadership of President His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

The policy applies the principles of strengthening bonds of friendship and cooperation with all countries of the world on the tenets of justice, equality, dialogue, mutual respect and understanding and love for goodness for all without exception, good neighbourliness, respect of sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of other states. It also advocates settling all its disputes amicably as per UN Charter and international legitimacy and international laws and conventions, and the promotion of peace, stability, and security in regional and international arenas.

Under the stewardship of H.H. Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, UAE diplomacy has built a wide network of strategic relationships and partnerships with countries around the world that has direct influence on the national economy, strengthening its presence and position.

The UAE's vital role in this regard is highly commended and appreciated by countries all over the world. It is seen both regionally and globally as an example of promoting the values of harmony and coexistence between different cultures and civilisations.

The UAE recognises that the challenges arising throughout the region and the world are partly due to the absence of the culture of coexistence, the spread of extremism and violence. Therefore, the



An aerial view of Abu Dhabi

UAE calls, in various regional and international fora, for the need to develop strategies for enhancing constructive dialogue between cultures, respecting beliefs and religions and spreading the culture of peace in order to challenge the attempts to distort the values of religions and provoke religious hatred.

In a statement at the General Debate of the 71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York last September, H.H. Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan set out the UAE's approach towards many pressing regional and international crises and challenges.

"In our region and beyond, several countries are facing multiple crises and conflicts that ignited after 2011. We have witnessed a number of Arab countries including

Yemen, Libya, Iraq, Syria and Somalia that have descended into internal fighting. At the same time, the Palestinian people's plight continues under the Israeli occupation without a just solution on the horizon that returns to the Palestinian people the rights that were stripped of them, to establish their state on June 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

His Highness noted that regional interference in Arab affairs, mainly perpetrated by Iran, the only country in the world with a constitution that explicitly calls for exporting its revolution, has aggravated conflicts in the region.

"The serious challenges facing our region and many other countries require us to reflect together on ways to address these crises and reach consensual, timely and effective solutions, without undermining the existing significant efforts made in this regard," His Highness said.

"The reality is that prominent powers in these crises, whether regional or international sides, have settled for managing the crises that have struck our region without overcoming them. As a result, the dangers have been exacerbated, rendering these crises difficult to solve without doubled efforts and tremendous financial and human cost."

"The plight and suffering of the Palestinian people is nearing its seventh decade and has contributed to the increased waves of violence and counter violence due to the sub-par management of crises without seeking serious solutions by major actors and prominent powers, including those responsible for this tragedy," His Highness explained.

Similarly, Iraq has been suffering for more than a decade from sectarian acts and violence on an almost daily basis, in addition to the control of terrorist groups over a part of its territory, spreading fear and terror in the hearts of the Iraqi people and risking its regional integrity. "Moreover, the interference of Iran in its internal affairs has exacerbated the factors of division among its people. Yet, there is no comprehensive political solution that promotes consensus among the components of the Iraqi people, and puts an end to the marginalization of whole sections of Iraqi society," Sheikh Abdullah said.

On Libya, H.H. Sheikh Abdullah said that the UAE also welcomed

the Skhirat Agreement reached by the concerned parties in Libya as well as the formation of the Government of National Accord. "We hope that it will lead to further commitment to Libyan constitution-building, and solidifies cooperation between the Presidential Council and the House of Representatives, which both represent legitimacy in Libya. We also look forward to a unified national position that protects Libya's territorial soil and maintains the unity of its people."

With regards to Syria, the minister said that the UAE sees no possibility of resolving the Syrian crisis through military force. "To date, this path has only intensified the suffering of the brotherly people of Syria and increased the flow of refugees to other countries. The situation is further complicated by the interference of Iran and its terrorist militias in Syria's affairs. This has distorted the vision for Syria and derailed it from the existing path, which is based on internationally agreed terms, which constitute the only salvation from this horrific tragedy," he said.

Speaking on the situation in Yemen, His Highness said there have been a number of initiatives, including an effective roadmap, presented by the legitimate government of Yemen in Kuwait, and at the quartet meeting held in Jeddah this past August, that could have saved the Yemeni people from their suffering. "We hope that these efforts result in a political solution if the intentions of these militias are sincere and if they live up to the standards of national interest and its responsibilities."

In 2016, the UAE reiterated its unwavering position on rejection of the continued Iranian occupation of the three islands, Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, which constitute an integral part of the United Arab Emirates' territory.

The state demands restoration of full sovereignty over its three islands. It also stresses that all actions and measures carried out by the Iranian authorities are contrary to international law, norms and common values.

The international community, including the Arab League, GCC and OIC, also stressed its support for the UAE's sovereignty over the three islands, territorial waters, airspace, continental shelf and the three Islands' economic zone. The UAE condemned the 'Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act' that will allow the families of 9/11 victims to sue Saudi Arabia's government for damages.

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UAE AND THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM

The Government of the United Arab Emirates continued to build its counterterrorism capacity and strengthened its international counterterrorism cooperation. The UAE government remains dedicated to providing strong support for the Global Coalition to Counter Daesh. Prominent officials and religious leaders continue to publicly criticise violent extremist ideology and deny and criminalise terrorist acts taking place across the world.

Dr. Anwar Gargash, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, in a speech at the Third Abu Dhabi Strategic Debate, ADSD, in November 2016, said, "The UAE is absolutely committed to combating and overcoming extremism and terrorism. The UAE argues that the link between extremist ideologies and terrorist acts is a clear one. We cannot face up to one without the other."

He added that the UAE is an active member of the Global Coalition to Counter Daesh and fully supports the international community's efforts to degrade and destroy Daesh. The ongoing battle to liberate Mosul is a critical turning point in this effort, he said.

UAE government leaders and senior Emirati officials publicly highlighted the dangers of Daesh and violent extremism, using media to counter Daesh messaging.

The UAE is leading efforts to promote tolerance and compassion through Islam, countering the root causes of extremism and disrupting online messages that lead to radicalisation.

The Sawab Centre, a joint collaboration between the UAE and US to counter extremist propaganda and terrorist messaging in the online space, was launched in July 2015 to contest Daesh's online presence by responding directly to

its propaganda through immediate reactive messaging as well as proactive campaigns.

Under the UAE government's cybercrime law, the UAE criminalises the use of the internet by terrorist groups to promote their ideologies and finance their activities.

Another major UAE initiative is Hedayah, the International Centre of Excellence for Countering Violent Extremism, CVE, which was created in response to the growing desire from members of the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum and the wider international community for the establishment of an independent, multilateral centre devoted to Countering Violent Extremism in all of its forms and manifestations.

The Abu Dhabi-based Centre's mandate focuses on three core areas: Dialogue and Communications; Capacity Building Programmes and Research and Analysis Cataloguing.

In late October, 2016, Hedayah launched the "Creative Minds for Social

Good", a new public-private initiative to increase the capacity of credible private voices in the Middle East and North Africa to create and disseminate compelling online content that counters terrorist propaganda and promotes positive alternatives in the region. Hedayah conducted the programme in collaboration with the U.S. Department of State and Facebook.

Through close coordination and cooperation, the UAE and the US are working together to stop the influx of foreign fighters to Syria and Iraq.

The UAE is a founding member of the Global Counterterrorism Forum, GCTF, and chaired the Working Group on Countering Violent Extremism with the UK.

Through close monitoring and strict enforcement, the UAE has effectively prevented and disrupted the illicit financing of extremist groups through the UAE financial system and within UAE borders.

The Joint UAE-US Financial Counterterrorism Task Force enhances cooperation, coordination and information sharing to shut down terrorist financing networks and cut off the flow of funds to extremists.

The Task Force helps block funding to extremists from individuals and commercial activity such as black market sales of oil, and prevents access to the international banking system.

The UAE supports strict enforcement of counterterrorist financing laws and regulations, encouraging increased monitoring of charitable fundraising and further examination of money flows across the region.

Regionally, the UAE called upon the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, OIC, to adopt a collective and strategic approach that strengthens its role in inter-

national counterterrorism efforts.

"Extremism, terrorism and sectarianism have become an international menace that seeks to undermine the nation-state, dismember the social fabric and societal harmony, and threaten national and regional security as well as international peace and security," said Sheikhha Lubna bint Khalid Al Qasimi, Minister of State for Tolerance, in a statement at the annual coordination meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Member States of the OIC, which was held on the margins of the 71st session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

Globally, the UAE has endorsed a United Nations plan to prevent terrorism and extremism.

The country welcomed the adoption of a UN draft resolution that aims to prevent violent extremism, saying it must also address factors that promote extremism, such as "foreign occupation and state terrorism."

The UAE said the plan must also hold states that compromise the principles of sovereignty and interfere in the internal affairs of other nations accountable for their actions.

Lana Nusseibeh, the UAE's permanent representative to the UN, said that the initiative should be a blueprint for coordinating efforts to combat extremism.

Ms. Nusseibeh applauded a recommendation to create regional plans of action to prevent extremism, while stressing the need for international efforts to assist states in ending conflict.

She also pointed out UAE efforts to prevent extremism, which include youth involvement, female empowerment and participation and role of religious leaders "to promote the values of peace".

[Abridged]

Warmest Greetings & Felicitations
on 46th Anniversary
of the National Day
of United Arab Emirates
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