

SAUDI ARABIA IN FOCUS

MONTHLY UPDATE | Saudi Mission to the EU

JANUARY | FEBRUARY 2020

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From the Ambassador

The first two months of 2020 have marked the achievement of striking benchmarks of Saudi Vision 2030. The Kingdom's reforms have received international recognition through the World Bank's "Women, Business and the Law" report, which ranked Saudi Arabia as the world's top reformer.

The 2020 Saudi Presidency of the G20, as well as the Kingdom's election to UNESCO's Executive Board and its World Heritage Committee, mark a new era of Saudi international relations and geopolitical projection. Also, the appointment of Princess Haifa Bint Abdul Aziz Al-Mogrin as Saudi Arabia's Permanent Representative to UNESCO marks yet another milestone for women empowerment in the Kingdom.

Women empowerment and international cooperation are cornerstones of Saudi Vision 2030. The Kingdom's privileged geographic location at the crossroads of three continents, along with its regional and global prominence, makes it a driving force for improvement. The reforms happening in Saudi Arabia benefit not only the Saudi people but also all our partners around the globe. Through Vision 2030, our global partnerships – and, notably, the one with the European Union – will be even stronger and reciprocally beneficial.

We will continue working on expanding the EU-Saudi relationship even further by building up on bilateral dialogues, improving our mutual understanding, encouraging the exchange of knowledge and investment between our peoples, and building bridges between Saudi Arabia and the European Union.

Saad bin Mohammad Alarify
Head of the Mission of Saudi Arabia to the European Union

SAUDI ARABIA IS THE WORLD'S TOP REFORMER ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS

The World Bank recently published a report that ranks Saudi Arabia as the world's top reformers in terms of women's rights, especially when it comes to gender equality in the workforce. The report highlights the impressive pace of Saudi Arabia's progress. The Kingdom has implemented ground-breaking reforms over the last two years to advance women's economic participation as part of Saudi Vision 2030.

The bank's "Women, Business and the Law" (WBL) report measures gender inequality in the law, identifies barriers to women's economic participation, and encourages reform of discriminatory laws. The report highlights improvements in Saudi Arabia's score in six of the eight indicators, notably in women's mobility, following the removal of restrictions on obtaining a passport and traveling abroad.



All-female panel in Saudi career fair, in Riyadh (Photo: SPA)

Issam Abu Sulaiman, the World Bank's regional director for GCC, lauded the Kingdom's achievement: "Saudi Arabia basically has become one of the leaders in the Arab World in terms of women empowerment," he said. "We expect that this will contribute tremendously to the realization of Vision 2030 when it comes to economic growth, diversification, and women employment."

Saudi Arabia has launched various campaigns and introduced new regulations to empower its female population as part of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's plan to modernize the country and accelerate economic development. The bold package of reforms includes expanding women's access to employment opportunities in new sectors of the economy, lifting restrictions on their mobility, ensuring their access to public services, guaranteeing equal pay and retirement benefits, and protecting them against harassment and discrimination.

Through those reforms, women's contribution to the economy will steadily increase to meet one of Vision 2030's main objectives – raising female participation in the labor market from 22 percent to 35 percent by 2030.



VISION 2030 CONTINUES TO EMPOWER SAUDI WOMEN, EXPAND GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS

Arab Women's Committee announces Riyadh as capital of Arab Women for 2020



Dr. Hala bint Mazyad Al-Tuwaijri, Secretary-General of the Saudi Family Affairs Council, at the 39th session of the Arab Women Committee (Photo: SPA)

The Arab Women Committee, a platform under the umbrella of the League of Arab States, has announced Riyadh as the capital of Arab women for 2020, under the slogan "Women are a homeland and an ambition."

Dr. Hala bint Mazyad Al-Tuwaijri, Secretary-General of the Saudi Family Affairs Council, said that the declaration was due to Saudi Arabia's prominent role in the regional and global contexts, and its proven support for women's empowerment. "In line with the words of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and as many ministers have confirmed... we believe that the issues concerning women also concern everyone," Dr. al-Tuwaijri said.

The Arab Women Committee – chaired by Saudi Arabia for a year – discussed several issues. Those included the 2030 agenda for sustainable development, women's empowerment in the Arab world, and the follow-up to the recommendations of the Ministerial Conference that focused on women's empowerment and its impact on social development.

Princess Haifa named Saudi Arabia's permanent representative to UNESCO

King Salman has approved the appointment of Princess Haifa Bint Abdul Aziz Al-Mogrin to be the Kingdom's Permanent Representative to the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The Kingdom plays a prominent role in UNESCO and, in November 2019, assumed membership in its Executive Council until 2023.

Princess Haifa, formerly the Assistant Deputy Minister for Sustainable Development and G20 Affairs, is an experienced public server and academic.

She worked as a lecturer at King Saud University from 2008 to 2009 and has held key positions at the Ministry of Economy and Planning. Her previous posts include Assistant Undersecretary for Sustainable Development Affairs, Acting Assistant Undersecretary for G20 Affairs, and Head of the Sustainable Development Goals Sector.



Arab Coalition enforces accountability of Humanitarian Law violators



Saudi Arabia's ambassador to Yemen, Mohammed Al-Jaber, and coalition spokesman Col. Turki Al-Maliki speaking in London (Photo: SPA)

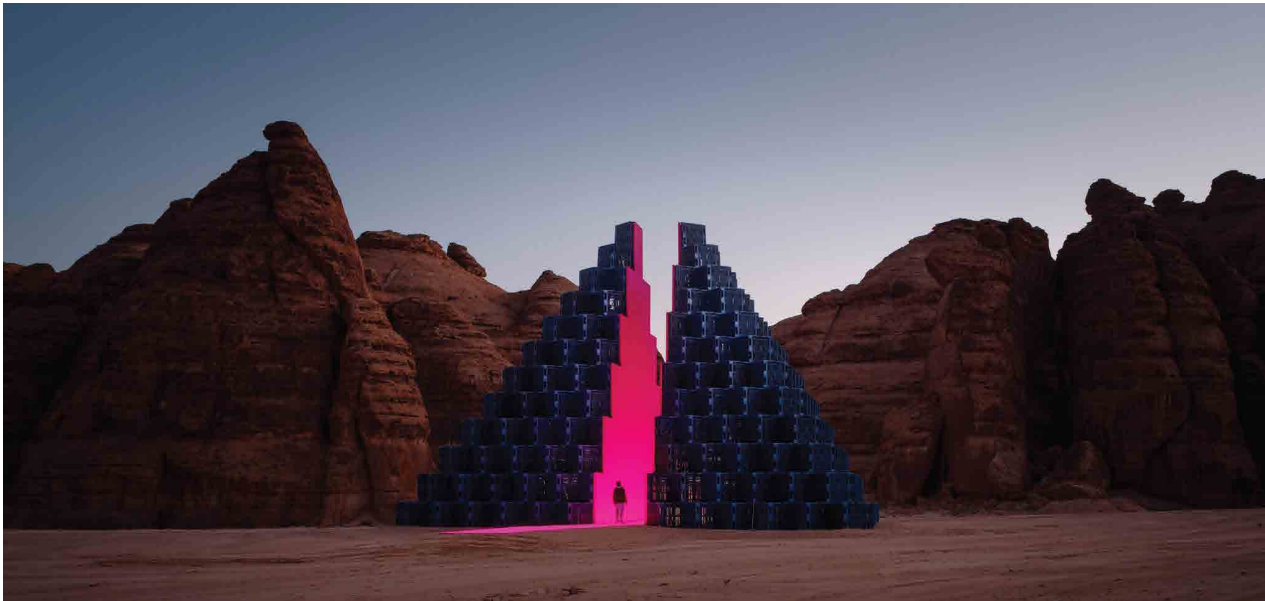
The Arab Coalition fighting to restore the internationally recognized Yemeni government has referred to judicial authorities several cases in which mistakes occurred, and the operations violated international humanitarian law. The Joint Incident Assessment Team, an investigative body set up by the Coalition, has referred 182 cases to judicial authorities and discovered breaches of rules in 22 investigations.

The investigative procedures, including documents and evidence, have been sent to coalition member nations to ensure those responsible are held accountable, said Coalition spokesman Col. Turki Al-Maliki. He pointed out that the judicial authorities have begun trial procedures, and the judgments will be announced once they acquire the peremptory status.

Col. Al-Maliki affirmed the Coalition's commitment to international humanitarian law and the accountability of violators of the rules of engagement and violators of international humanitarian law. The Arab Coalition supporting the UN-recognized government of Yemen has been fighting against Houthi militias for nearly five years.

VISION 2030 CONTINUES TO EXPAND GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS

Saudi Arabia unveils plans to develop AlUla into the “World’s Largest Living Museum”



Installation by Saudi artist Rashed Al Shashai, “A Concise Passage”
(Photo: Desert X Al Ula)

Saudi Arabia has unveiled plans to develop AlUla historic site into the world’s largest living museum and a remarkable heritage, cultural, arts, and adventure tourism destination. The development plans were announced during the 10th UN World Urban Forum in Abu Dhabi.

AlUla is renowned for its outstanding natural beauty, as well as its tremendous archaeological diversity. It is also shaping a new cultural landscape in Saudi Arabia. This month, AlUla hosted the first Hegra Conference of Nobel Laureates and DesertX AlUla, the first site-responsive outdoor art installation featuring the work of both Saudi and international artists.

“The balanced development strategy places people first as part of a broader commitment to become an open living museum for the world and a global center for culture, heritage, arts, and eco-tourism projects,” the CEO of the Royal Commission for

AlUla (RCU), Amr Al-Madani, said. “By combining heritage with nature, we are transforming the cultural landscape of AlUla and establishing the county as a global tourism destination with a thriving economy and local community.”

“Not only have we opened our doors to travelers benefiting from Saudi Arabia’s new tourist visas, but we’ve also delivered the infrastructure that is central to growth,” Al-Madani said. Saudi Arabia aims to host two million visitors a year in AlUla by 2035. The RCU estimates the project will create more than 67,000 new jobs - almost half of them in the tourism sector.

AlUla’s existing community is at the heart of its sustainable development plan. The RCU has already engaged world-class hospitality training for residents to create teams of Rowah (tour guides), wildlife rangers, and Hammayah (heritage guardians). Also, AlUla high school graduates have been awarded sponsorships to study at top-class international universities, unleashing their talent to execute and build upon the development plan.

Netflix starts streaming award-winning Saudi films

Netflix, the world’s leading streaming entertainment service, has exclusively acquired six award-winning short films from a Saudi-based Telfaz11 Studios. The films will be available for viewers all across Europe starting Thursday, 27 February.

The short films, to be released under the name “Six Windows in the Desert,” were made by Saudi creators and aimed to touch upon thought-provoking subjects with a focus on social themes. Alaa Fadan, CEO at Telfaz11 Studios, said: “It brings us immense pride to have six of our short films brought onto Netflix. We are excited to bring the work of local Saudi talents to 167 million subscribers around the world. Telfaz11 Studios produces authentic and intriguing stories from our culture, and we cannot wait for the world to see what we have to offer.”

The movies shine a light on universal topics, such as social taboos, extremism, and the human psyche. Not only will “Six Windows in the Desert” offer global audiences a lens into the perspective of the Saudi creators but also through the eyes of film characters with their individual takes on storytelling.



“Is Sumyati going to Hell?”, by Saudi filmmaker Meshal Aljaser (2016)

Leading figures in the Kingdom’s movie industry hailed the agreement as “a great step for Saudi filmmaking” which would throw the international spotlight on the country’s emerging talent. Nuha El-Tayeb, director of content acquisition at Netflix, said the deal meant viewers would have “exclusive access to captivating and intriguing stories from the Arab world.”

THE LATEST : SAUDI ARABIA IN THE EU

Saudi Arabia reaffirms humanitarian commitment to Yemen



Ambassador Saad Alarify and Director for Partnerships and International Relations of the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre, Dr. Yahya Alshammari, participated in the Humanitarian Senior Officials meeting, in Brussels.

The European Commission and the government of Sweden organized the meeting to address the recent crisis in Yemen, triggered by the obstructions inflicted by the Houthi rebels and their threat to impose a tax over humanitarian aid.

Saudi Arabia reaffirmed its commitment to providing vital support for the Yemeni people, as well as coordinating efforts with the European Union, the United Nations, and other humanitarian organizations.

HE Ambassador Saad Alarify enhanced Saudi-EU alignment through engagement in a series of constructive dialogs with senior members of EU Institutions and prominent policymakers

His Excellency Ambassador Saad Alarify continued the Mission's intense work to advance cooperation between Saudi Arabia and the European Union in vital areas of mutual concern.

Talks focused on increasing the Saudi-EU dialogue to strengthen relations and cooperate on tackling common challenges.



HE Ambassador Alarify met with Ms Christine Lagarde, President of the European Central Bank



Ambassador Alarify attended the New Year's reception hosted by the President of the European Parliament, David Sassoli



HE Ambassador Alarify met with Ambassador Georgios Zacharioudakis, Greece's representative to the Political and Security Committee



HE Ambassador Alarify met with Ambassador Stavros Hatzigiannis, Cyprus' representative to the Political and Security Committee