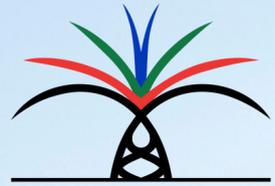


The Abraham Accords Anniversary Brochure



UAE - Israel Business Council
הפורום העסקי מדינות האיחוד האמריקני - ישראל
مجلس الأعمال الإماراتي الإسرائيلي



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The Abraham Accords Anniversary Brochure

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Introduction

Only a year has passed since the announcement of the Abraham Accords, but for the people of the Middle East, these historic agreements have already had a far-reaching impact.

The UAE-Israel Business Council was established to support the ideals underpinning the Accords, with a focus on commerce and trade as a catalyst for normalization and co-existence. Our goal has been to build the people-to-people relationships which lead to mutually-beneficial cooperation.

Over the past year, we held dozens of in-person and virtual meetings, round-tables, industry-specific educational sessions, cultural events and social gatherings among our members and partners from across the region. We've been privileged to offer our 4,000+ members a range of opportunities to build personal and business ties with counterparts from countries they could not even visit a year ago.

What is most beautiful about our work is that we have fostered a community that is invested in promoting cooperation and peace.

As we mark the first anniversary of the Abraham Accords- we celebrate not only peace between the UAE, Bahrain, Morocco, Sudan and Israel, but also the hope that the diverse peoples of the Middle East can overcome their differences, and encounter each other through commerce, dialogue and win-win cooperation.

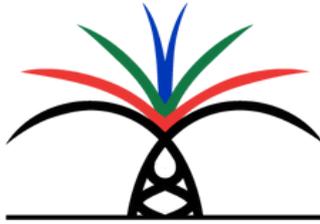
This brochure is a further product of collaboration between leading figures in the Middle East and North Africa region, as well as others involved in advancing the Abraham Accords. It showcases the progress that has been achieved at the levels of business, innovation, diplomacy, academia, and civil society.

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to our distinguished contributors. May you continue to foster peace and prosperity among the children of Abraham!

Fleur Hassan-Nahoum
CO-FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT

Abdulla Baqer
PRESIDENT - UAE

Dorian Barak
CO-FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT



UAE - Israel Business Council
הפורום העסקי איחוד האמירויות - ישראל
مندی الأعمال الاماراتي الاسرائيلي

About Us

The UAE-Israel Business Council (UIBC) is the premier business association bridging the United Arab Emirates and Israel.

Established in June 2020 to foster shared opportunities, economic cooperation and partnerships between the business communities of both countries and beyond, the UIBC has developed into a community of over 4,000 entrepreneurs, influencers, and professionals from established companies, startups, investment funds, NGOs and government agencies.

We regularly host events with prominent business people, government officials, and industry leaders on topics ranging from how to do business in Israel, the UAE and the Gulf, to in-person and on-line roundtable discussions about specific opportunities and cultural topics. Among the webinars we have organized this year, we have tackled a few subjects including: Food & Beverage, and Cosmetics Industry, Travel Tourism & Hospitality Opportunities, the renewables Markets of Israel and the UAE.

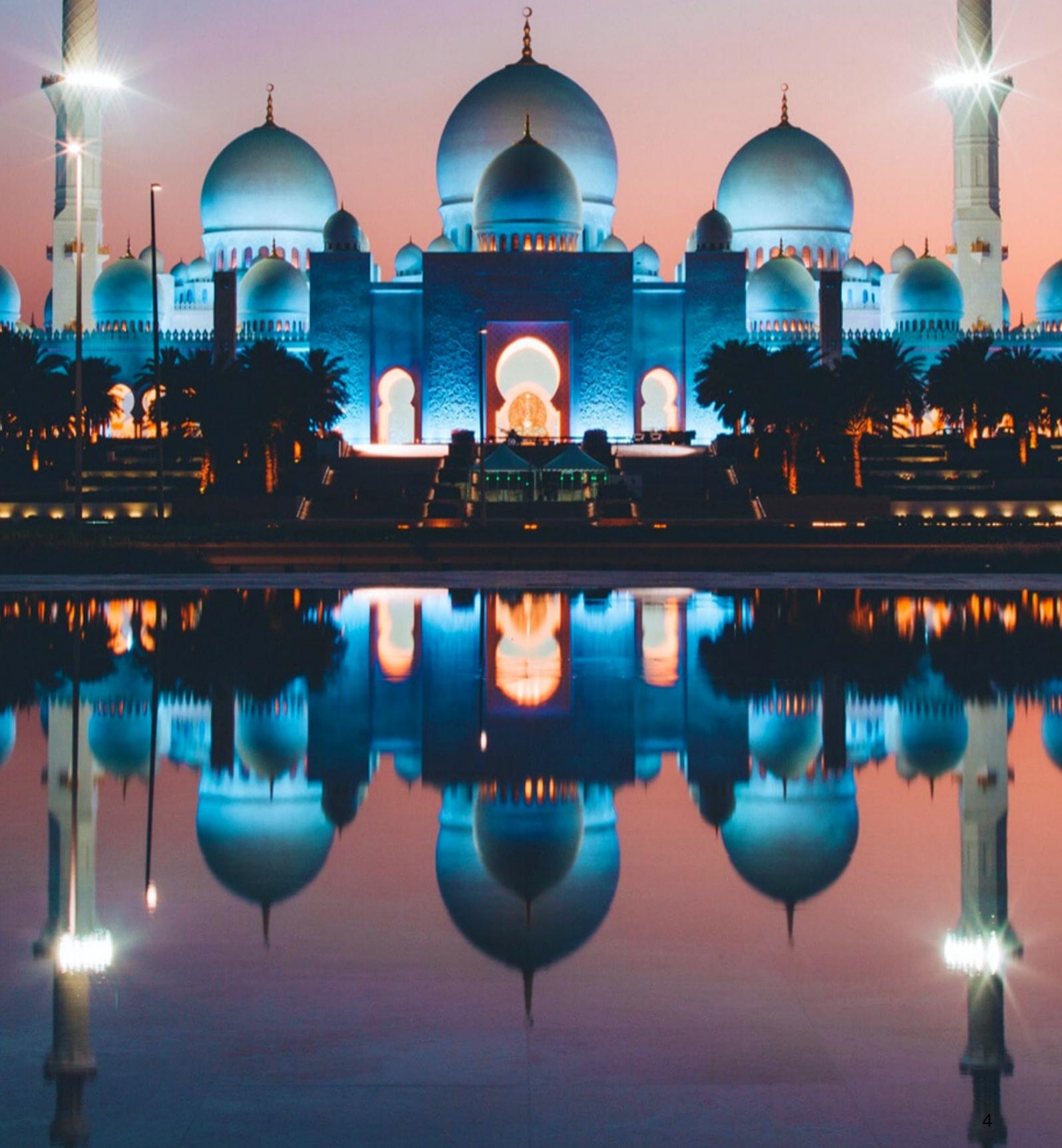
In addition, the UIBC has established a vibrant and active women's forum, the Gulf-Israel Women's Forum, which aims to unite women from across the region with similar interests and values. They also have organized their own events this year like the Women in Media webinar or the special event for International Women's day and face to face meetings in Dubai.

Already prior to the Abraham Accords - the UIBC, together with the Dayan Center at Tel Aviv University, convened the Gulf-Israel Policy Forum - that brings together leading researchers, policy advisors and journalists from Israel and the Gulf for ongoing consultations, discussions and collaborations. The forum has, over the past year, proven itself an important space for discreet and open discussion on policy matters related to the region and the implementation of the Abraham Accords

Our activity has been widely highlighted across the region in traditional and online media including Bloomberg, CNN, CNBC, BBC, Agence France-Presse, Al Arabiya, Fox News, Gulf News, Arab News, Gulf Business, Gulf Today, Arte, The Jerusalem Post, Yedioth Achronoth, Ynet, Reuters, The Nikkei, The Khaleej Times, The National and many others.

[Join our community by clicking here!](#)

The Anniversary Articles



Advancing a Warm Peace through Regional Cooperation

By H.E. Minister for Regional Cooperation Esawi Frej

The Abraham Accords have created an extraordinary opportunity to expand and deepen warm peace and practical cooperation throughout our region.

I deeply believe that the State of Israel, by building mutually-beneficial partnerships with Arab states, as well as with renewing dialogue with its Palestinian neighbors, can advance the goal of a secure and prosperous future for the Middle East.

As Israel's Minister for Regional Cooperation, I am spearheading initiatives in the fields of trade, business, infrastructure, health, innovation, environment and more, together with partners in neighboring countries, the Abraham Accords countries, and additional Arab states. These initiatives will improve the lives and livelihoods of the peoples and nations of the region.

By expanding relations between Israelis and their neighbors, we promote understanding and tolerance, counter extremism on all sides, and lay the groundwork for stability and security.

Israel's Arab communities can and should play a central role in building bridges between the State of Israel and Arab countries. Commonalities in language, religion and culture can all contribute to long-lasting and successful joint ventures. The young generation in particular can play a crucial part in building these bridges. It is therefore critical that the Israeli government invest in its young Arab citizens in general, and in programs related to innovation and international cooperation in particular. Other areas which involve youth, such as sports, music and arts, also hold great promise as platforms for people-to-people collaboration.



H.E. Minister Esawi Frej is the Minister of Regional Cooperation since June 2021.

יוסי זמיר ©

Ultimately, warm peace must be built on the pillars of mutual respect, interpersonal relationships, practical partnerships and the resolution of political disputes.

The Regional Cooperation Ministry will continue to work to strengthen these pillars in order to advance the vision of a peaceful, secure and flourishing Middle East.

One year to the announcement of the Abraham Accords, it is becoming increasingly clear that all those dedicated to a future of peace must harness the momentum of the Accords to both strengthen existing agreements, and expand the circle of peace.

Follow H.E. Minister Esawi Frej on Twitter @EsawiFr

Bahrain and Israel: One Year In and a Lifetime to Go

By H.E Ambassador Houda Nonoo

The signing of the Abraham Accords will no doubt be one of the biggest Middle East milestones in our lifetime and as we celebrate its first anniversary, it is an opportunity to reflect on the past year and to look forward to the limitless opportunities ahead of us. As one of the few indigenous Jews in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, it is particularly meaningful to me. As a citizen of this region, I am filled with excitement to see the construction of a new Middle East, one focused on coexistence and prosperity.

Last November, I had the honor and privilege of participating in a delegation led by Foreign Minister H.E. Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al-Zayani to Israel – the first time Bahraini officials landed in Israel, flying on our national carrier, Gulf Air Flight number 972. While it was historic and memorable for all, it was particularly exciting for me as a Bahraini Jew.

This was my very first visit to Israel. As you may know, I was the first Jew to ever be appointed as an ambassador of Bahrain and the first woman to serve as Bahrain's ambassador to the United States. During my five years serving in Washington, I made many new

friends and was often asked if I had been to Israel.

I always said, "not yet." In my heart, I hoped and prayed for the opportunity, but I was determined to wait for the moment when circumstances would allow such a visit. As a loyal and committed citizen of Bahrain, I naturally respected the reality of the situation. I could only dream. And hope. And wait. And dream some more. Last November, that dream became a reality.

I would like to thank His Majesty, King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and His Royal Highness, Prince Salman Bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, for their leadership, vision, and courage to lead our nation proudly and boldly into the future through the signing of the Abraham Accords. I, like my fellow Bahraini citizens, express our support and enthusiasm for the opportunity our leaders have seized and the promise it represents to build a better life with security and opportunity for all of us and for future generations still to come.

As we approach the first anniversary of the Accords, I am just as excited now as I was when sitting on the White House lawn on September 15, 2020, as a member of Foreign Minister H.E. Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani's delegation.



H.E. Ambassador Houda Nonoo served as Bahrain's ambassador to the US and as a non-resident Ambassador to Canada, Brazil, Mexico & Argentina from 2008-2013

Over the past year, many collaborations between Bahrain and Israel have been announced. Many more are in the works as we look to increase opportunities in the oil & gas, logistics, information, cyber-security, technology, manufacturing, financial services, healthcare, education, and travel and tourism sectors.

In January, the National Bank of Bahrain signed MOUs with Israel's two largest banks – Bank Hapoalim and Bank Leumi. These MOUs were an important first step as both governments created plans to help their business communities participate in opportunities in both markets. These MOUs helped enable investments, trade, clearing services, foreign exchange, securities trade and other critical components to create business between the two countries.

In March, Bahrain signed a \$3 million agreement with Mekorot to share water knowledge and technologies, including desalination facilities, automated control systems for water facilities and technological upgrades. The agreement includes consulting by Mekorot for Bahrain's Electricity and Water Authority (EWA) regarding water projects in Bahrain.

That same month, Bahrain and Israel announced our first medical cooperation initiative between Salmaniya Medical Complex and Sheba Medical Center which includes exchange programs.

As we look toward the future, I am thrilled that H.E. Ambassador Khalid Yusuf Al-Jalahma has been appointed as Head of Bahrain's Diplomatic Mission to Israel. I had the opportunity to work with the Ambassador when I was in Washington and am excited for him

to help usher in this next stage of the Bahrain-Israel relationship.

I know he has many exciting plans and cannot wait to see them materialize and benefit both of our countries.

The first Gulf Air flight will take off soon from Manama to Tel Aviv which will then return with Israeli passengers looking to visit Bahrain for business and leisure. Our leaders want to encourage tourism. Since both of our countries have done impressive jobs vaccinating their citizens and residents, our leaders announced an unprecedented travel corridor for those who are vaccinated. Those carrying a "green pass" will be able to travel back and forth between Bahrain and Israel without quarantine. This sets the stage for tourism to start up fairly quickly.

“
As a citizen of this region, I am filled with excitement to see the construction of a new Middle East, one focused on coexistence and prosperity.
”

As we embark on a new era in the Bahrain - Israel relationship, it is important to remember that at the core of this agreement is the desire to create a new Middle East, one built on peace and prosperity for all. I believe that the growing partnerships between Bahrain and Israel, will lead to sustainable peace in the region.



Airplane ticket from the first ever official ministerial visit from the Kingdom of Bahrain to Israel.

© Courtesy of H.E Ambassador Houda Nonoo

Follow H.E Ambassador Houda Nonoo on Twitter @hnonoo75

Breaking the Impasse!

By MK Ruth Wasserman Lande

“He who does not believe in miracles, is unrealistic”, said the first ever Prime Minister of the State of Israel, David Ben Gurion. Indeed, the Abraham Accords are nothing less than a regional miracle, given that their nature enabled the Israeli relationships with the United Arab Emirates, the Kingdom of Bahrain, Morocco and Sudan to transform Israel from a status of “persona non grata” into a legitimate and worthy partner in the region.

In fact, the very leadership shown by the rulers of the United Arab Emirates, striving to be the first and leading force in a multitude of fields, is astounding and noteworthy, in its courage and vision. In their action, they not only brought worth to their own people via the inclusion of F-35 fighter planes to their arsenal, but also opened a wide array of possibilities for technological, innovative, medical, scientific, economic, business and other fields of cooperation between the UAE and Israeli experts, businesspeople and professionals. Thus, as always, the leadership of the UAE has set the path, created the trend and in this case, has been the leading and first-of-its kind to break the walls of the Arab psychological boycott of Israel. Consequently, the entire Abrahamic endeavour can be seen, in my humble eyes, as Breaking the Impasse!

As Co-Chairperson of the Abrahamic Accords’ Parliamentary Caucus in the Israeli Knesset, together with my colleague from the opposition, Member of Knesset from the Likkud party, Ofir Akunis, I am honoured to create a first-of-its-kind platform in the Israeli Legislature, aiming to encourage discussion regarding the endless possibilities for enhancing the Accords. I see the potential in the creation of such a platform first and foremost in its very existence.

Yet, naturally, I wish to also have it cater to the Emirati, Bahraini, Moroccan and hopefully other embassies which have been, and will be, established in the State of Israel within the framework of the Abraham Accords.

In my vision, this honourable and prestigious platform can serve the official Israeli-Gulf Chamber of Commerce, headed by my dear friend, Henrique Zimmerman; the UAE-Israel Business Council, headed by the lovely “Superwoman” Deputy Head of the Jerusalem Municipality, Fleur Hassan Nahum, and every other possible organization which sees benefit in cooperation between the countries partnering in the Abraham Accords. The Knesset may serve as a leverage and as a focal point via which to explore new ideas and delve deeper into existing ideas for cooperation, raising issues for discussion, awareness in the public and via the media, and more. The very fact that I, as a member of the Blue and White political party, am co-chairing this initiative with a member of the opposition is testament to the fact that this is neither an issue for partisan sentiments, nor for issues pertaining to right or left-wing politics, or divisive ideologies. Rather, it is proof of the fact that these Accords transcend such divisions and allow for a truly wholistic approach to that which is strategic, such as the ability to face mutual threats, as a potentially nuclear Iran with its various regional proxies, and warring ideology and also, to create mutually-beneficial solutions to the pandemic we are currently experiencing, COVID-19 and its variants, which know no geographical boundaries, religions and/or ethnic origins.



MK Ruth Wasserman Lande is the Chairperson of the Parliamentary Caucus of the Abraham Accords & was the Former Senior Advisor to President Shimon Peres

The solution needs to be one, for the benefit of mankind, much like that which we simply must embark on immediately—the Ecological and Environmental Challenge which we face globally, people of the world, making divisions based on religion, geography, territorialism, ethnic origin, colour and more completely and utterly meaningless.

I wish to salute those who believe in breaking the impasse, those who believe in miracles, without which my own country, Israel, would never have been established and could never have served as the sanctuary of the Jewish peoplehood throughout the world. I also see and envision the Accords as the ultimate platform upon which to forward the never-ending saga of Israeli-Palestinian strife, allowing the Palestinians to join the strenuous and ongoing efforts of the current government to engage in dialogue rather than wars, to engage in growth rather than destruction. The road is not an easy one, the circumstances not necessarily conducive, nor are the partners to the journey necessary helpful, but then again who if not the leading partners of The Abraham Accords can Break the Impasse!

Follow MK Ruth Wasserman Lande on Twitter @Rutilande

A Year to Remember

By Fleur Hassan-Nahoum

By all metrics, the economic impact during the first year following the signing of the Abraham Accords has been very successful. Even more remarkable is considering that these impressive numbers were during a pandemic year! I believe they will grow even larger in year two as more people are vaccinated, and the pandemic is behind us.

As both the Deputy Mayor of Jerusalem and the Co-Founder of the UAE-Israel Business Council, I am very focused on the business opportunities between our two nations and have been working with Dorian Barak (who co-founded the Council with me) and our founding members to strategize new sectors for collaboration. While we have always understood the compatibility of these two leading economies and the limitless opportunities, I'm not sure that we could ever have fathomed the massive impact these Accords have had socially on our two countries.

During a panel I participated in with H.E. Ambassador Yousuf Al Otaiba, the UAE Ambassador to Washington and one of the architects of the Accords, he remarked that he certainly understood the potential of the economic and strategic impact of the Abraham Accords, but could he have ever imagined an Israel-UAE Baseball Little League tournament

like the one held last March in Dubai? ...Never.

The people-to-people nature of these Accords is multifaceted, from cultural exchanges, participation in sporting games, cooperation in the arts, alliances in developing innovative solutions to common challenges, exchange of students and faculty in our higher education institutions, the list of collaborations is endless.

During my first visit to Dubai after Justine Zwerling and I had co-founded the Gulf-Israel Women's Forum, we decided to host our first "physical" meeting in a world that had become almost completely virtual as we were deep into the pandemic. Israelis had not yet arrived as tourists in the UAE, and there had not yet been any in-person, people-to-people meetings between Israelis and Emiratis since the signing of the Accords.

On a Friday morning, on the eve of Simcha Torah (the Jewish festival celebrating the end and the beginning of the cycle of reading the five books of Moses), my friend, Professor Daphne Richmond Barak and I, hopped into a taxi for this inaugural event which in many ways was the first social event between the people of the two countries. Nearly two dozen women showed up, many of whom I had never met.



Fleur Hassan-Nahoum is the Co-Founder and President, of the UAE-Israel Business Council & Deputy Mayor of Jerusalem

The atmosphere in the room was electric, as we all sat in small tables and got to know the women we were sitting with. We exchanged stories about our children, our husbands, our careers, and the challenges of COVID. Later, we sat around in a larger circle and introduced ourselves and our hopes for this nascent relationship. I will never forget the excitement and hope we felt sitting in the room surrounding by our new Emirati friends. They warmly received us and we sat there realizing that they were all equally committed to this new peace.

A picture from this historic meeting went viral all over social media, on TV broadcasts, online stories and WhatsApp groups.



First meeting of the Gulf-Israel Women's Forum at the at Dukes The Palm hotel in Dubai in October 2020
© Courtesy of Fleur Hassan Nahoum

It soon became the iconic photo encapsulating the opportunities for both our people. It also showed our deep commitment – from both sides – to create a peaceful relationship that was unprecedented in our region – a warm peace that went beyond documents our leaders signed but which permeated all corners of society. The fact that it was a women's gathering further strengthened the idea that we were creating a new model for peace in the Middle East, one led by women who ultimately envisioned a better region for their children.

The Gulf-Israel Women's Forum today includes more than 100 leaders who come from Israel, the US and all over the Arab world, including Bahrain, Egypt, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

We have held dozens of in-person and virtual gatherings since that amazing day back in October 2020. At our meeting in June in Dubai, we welcomed two Egyptian women who asked aloud why Israel and Egypt had never developed such ties. We welcomed them with open arms as we will welcome anyone committed to shaping our New Middle East.

The true triumph of the Abraham Accords is not just the economic trade pacts, or a realignment of the Middle East separating the moderate countries seeking peace and prosperity, from the extremist ones seeking chaos and destruction. What unites us is our joint desire to make friendship the base of all relationships between our two countries. We are reunited cousins – Muslims and Jews. The aptly named Abraham Accords is truly rebuilding the tent of Abraham.

Follow Fleur Hassan-Nahoum on Twitter @FleurHassanN

Moving Forward and Building a Joint Future

By Abdulla Baqer



Abdulla Baqer is the President (UAE)
of the UAE-Israel Business Council

Since the announcement of the Abraham Accords we have seen an ebullition of cooperation projects between Israel and the UAE. When I heard it in the news I felt immediately interested in this new era for the region. It feels like a new chapter has started. I had the chance to meet a high number of Israelis this year from different backgrounds and have developed with them genuine friendships.

In our leadership we trust, and supporting my government's decision was the natural thing to do to support a long-term peace. In fact, the Abraham Accords are not only a commitment for us but also to the next generations committed to a better future. I believe these accords will bring stability and peace to the region and will serve all populations. I think, we, the UAE have set an example for peace, and I hope other countries in the region will follow suit as did Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco.

Of course, there are topics we disagreed on this year but what has changed is that we talked directly about it like a family. You may not always agree with your relatives but you still have strong bonds with them.

Furthermore, the results of the Abraham Accords overpass social purpose. It is already visible that they have a positive economic impact on many sectors including health, entertainment, music, and sport. It shows that peace can also come with prosperity. I expect many more deals to come on logistics, medicine and start-up incubation for the second year of the Abraham Accords. I'm impatient to participate in these exciting developments with my position at the UAE-Israel Business Council and as President for the UAE!

Follow Abdulla Baqer on Twitter @abdulla_baqer1

Celebrating the Success of the Abraham Accords and Looking Toward the Future

By Ariella Steinreich

As we celebrate the first anniversary of the Abraham Accords, it is an opportunity to reflect on all the amazing opportunities that have developed this past year as a result of new relationships, as well as to look forward to new opportunities that will be realized in the future. The diplomatic relations between Israel and Bahrain and Israel and the UAE benefit the region as a whole.

On the business front, nearly every day we hear of another memorandum of understanding (MOU) signing or new office opening as business and trade increasingly flow between the countries. Our firm is proud to have helped usher in some of these partnerships by handling the communications for them. In the travel and tourism industry, we are helping hotels understand the Israeli tourist and facilitating kosher food for Jewish guests more broadly. In the technology sector, we see Greentech, Fintech and Agritech as leaders.

The Israeli businesses who have entered the Gulf this year through the UAE or Bahrain are the early adopters who will find it easier to transition into other Gulf markets. The road to success for Israeli companies is through the Bahrain or UAE market because once you build your brand's name locally in the Gulf, it is much easier to then move into other GCC markets. As soon as the next neighboring country signs the Accords, you can be one of the first to enter since your brand will already have a reputation in the region. We see the impact each day as we work with thought leaders, organizations and non-profits in the UAE, Bahrain, and Israel.

We see opportunities in several sectors, particularly technology, travel and tourism, education, and healthcare.

But this is not one-sided, and while there has been much focus on Israeli companies doing business in the Gulf over the last year, I believe we are going to see more Gulf companies do business in Israel as a gateway to the broader global Jewish community. We are already starting to see that in certain sectors such as travel and tourism, finance and technology.

However, the impact of these Accords is not just in the business sphere, it is social and cultural as well.

As someone who has been working in the GCC region for the past decade, there have been many exciting announcements this year that would not have been impossible when I began. If someone had told me 10 years back that today, I would have the chance to visit a Holocaust exhibition in Dubai or eat kosher food at a hotel in Bahrain, I would have been amazed.

I have participated in Shabbat meals both in Bahrain and the UAE with many Muslims who were experiencing their first Shabbat. One Shabbat in particular sticks out in my mind as I joined the Association of Gulf Jewish Communities for their first in-person Shabbat dinner in Dubai. In addition to members of the UAE and Bahraini Jewish communities, we were joined by many Emirati Muslims and the evening extended far beyond the Shabbat dinner as many stayed until the early hours of the morning as we discussed the



Ariella Steinreich SVP and Head of the Middle East Division for Steinreich Communications, a Founding Member of the UAE-Israel Business Council, and a Founding Member of the Gulf-Israel Women's Forum

opportunities for the region going forward and our joint excitement in helping to turn this dream into a reality.

As we approach the first anniversary, we are all just as excited as we were on September 15, 2021 as we watched Bahraini, Emirati, Israeli and American leaders sitting on the White House lawn signing the Abraham Accords, which has changed the Middle East for the better. As we enter year two of the UAE-Israel and Bahrain-Israel relationship, we must remember that we are still in the beginning stages of the relationship. Gulf businesses are still learning about Israeli companies and culture and vice versa. Companies need to establish a footprint in these markets and there is no better time to do so than now. Moving quickly to raise awareness for your brands needs to happen sooner rather than later, as the floodgates have been opened.

Follow Ariella Steinreich on Twitter @Ariellas1

The Abraham Accords: Opening the Door to UAE-Israel Cooperation for a Sustainable Future

By Asher Fredman

The Abraham Accords are not just another set of agreements between nations. By opening the door to warm peace and full cooperation, the Accords have the potential to transform the region and even the entire world. Nowhere is this tremendous potential more apparent than in the field of sustainable innovation and development.

The one-year anniversary of the Abraham Accords coincides with the rapidly-evolving global conversation regarding climate change and its impacts on health, stability and prosperity. September will see the opening of Dubai Expo 2020, with its focus on sustainability, to be followed in October by the UN Climate Change Conference, COP 26. The international community is facing a core dilemma- how to promote an accelerated post-COVID economic recovery that advances, rather than undermines, sustainable development goals.

The solution to this dilemma is green innovation. Israel and the UAE are already leaders in this field. Israel is home to hundreds of cutting-edge cleantech start-ups. According to the latest Global Cleantech Innovation Index, Israel ranked second in the world in emerging cleantech innovation.

The report notes that Israel, “has developed an entrepreneurial population, excellent research facilities, and a wealth of...capital accessibility to create an extraordinary pool of innovative start-ups working in the cleantech sphere...”.

The UAE, in line with the visionary decision of the Emirati leadership to transform the country into a global leader in sustainability, has implemented some of the world’s most impressive large-scale climate projects. These include Masdar City, one of the most environmentally-friendly cities on the planet, several of the world’s largest and most efficient solar fields, and the Middle East’s first Carbon Capture and Storage facility. The UAE is also developing its own cleantech ecosystem through the establishment of top-tier academic and R&D institutes.

The combination of Israeli and Emirati strengths, capabilities and spirit can revolutionize the Middle East, and lead to the disruptive innovation that will have far-reaching impacts across the globe. The diverse areas of shared concern and focus include renewable energy and energy efficiency, water and food security, low-emissions mobility, air quality, green construction, recycling and reuse, and environmental preservation.



Asher Fredman is a founding member of the UAE-Israel Business Council, CEO of Gulf-Israel Green Ventures, and the Founder of the Israeli-Emirati Forum.

Collaboration in these fields will help both countries achieve the ambitious environmental targets set by their governments, and improve the health and well-being of all their residents. Technologies and methods developed through joint Emirati-Israeli ventures can be implemented throughout the international arena, especially in the developing world.

This cooperation will also provide concrete proof of the vast mutual benefits of normalization between Israel and its Arab neighbors. As additional Arab and Muslim countries, including Saudi Arabia, Oman and Qatar, launch large-scale environmental projects, successful initiatives between the Abraham Accords countries will demonstrate the benefits of peace not only for countering common threats, but for improving the lives and quality of life of people throughout the region.

Despite the monumental potential inherent in UAE-Israel cooperation, it is important to recognize that this potential is not self-fulfilling. That is, left to its own, while a certain number of UAE-Israel business deals will certainly be signed, the full potential of this relationship may not be realized. Together with the synergies between the two countries, there are also certain barriers and misalignments that must be overcome.

Some of these barriers derive from differences in business culture, orientation, regulation and goals. Others derive from decades of political and social disconnect.

The mission of Gulf-Israel Green Ventures, is to overcome these barriers and build a bridge between

the greentech ecosystems of the Abraham Accords countries.

We work with partners and friends in the UAE and throughout the Gulf to create mutually beneficial relationships between entrepreneurs, companies, investors, experts and environmental activists on all sides.

The first year since the announcement of the Abraham Accords has been dedicated to the extremely important work of building trust, understanding and friendships between people on all sides.

This people-to-people activity has created the necessary basis both for a lasting warm peace, and for a thriving economic relationship.

Over the coming year, we will see the maturation of these initial contacts, which will include the accelerated realization of numerous exciting commercial agreements.

As the founder of Gulf-Israel Green Ventures, as well as of the Israeli-Emirati Forum, the largest grassroots people-to-people platform, I am deeply thankful for having had the opportunity to play a part in advancing the UAE-Israel relationship. I deeply believe that if we continue to develop these ties, including through strategic efforts to overcome barriers and leverage synergies, we can realise the full potential of the Abraham Accords. Together, we can create a brighter, healthier and more sustainable future for our countries, our region, and the entire world.



Visit to Masdar City, the world-leading sustainable city being developed in Abu Dhabi to discuss cooperation on sustainability & clean technologies.
© Asher Fredman

Our Life's Dream, the Abraham Accords, Family reunited

By Justine Zwerling

Two years ago, if someone had told me, "shortly, you will be going into a global pandemic", I would have responded, "in my worst nightmares, no!" But if they would have then continued, "and then you will be gaining a whole new family and friends for life, a new peace, and that your children will visit the UAE with you", I would have responded, "this is our life's dream, InShallah, Bizrat hashem." Then came the biggest gift of our lives, the Abraham Accords, during the global pandemic.

When the news arrived, my children found their mother in tears of joy and much to their embarrassment, dancing around our local supermarket with glee. "Oh please mummy, can you stop dancing? Calm down!", they chided. In that moment of gleeful rejoice, it struck me, the critical role we have as parents, is to spread our new peace via our children and people to people, mothers to mothers, the foundation and future of it all.

Deputy Mayor of Jerusalem, Co-Founder of the UAE Israel Business Council and Gulf Israel Women's Forum, Fleur Hassan-Nahoum, Senior Vice President of Steinreich Communications, founding member of UAE-Israel Business Council and Gulf-Israel Women's Forum, Ariella Steinreich and I, all founded the Gulf-Israel Women's Network as part of the UAE-Israel Business Council in July 2020. In doing so we harnessed our communication and community building skills, coupled with friendship, love, sisterhood, motherhood, cultural exchange and business with the goal of reconnecting with our sisters in the UAE, Gulf, Bahrain, Morocco, Sudan, Egypt, Pakistan, Saudi and beyond.

Within weeks, we were fortunate to have met, both virtually and in-person, our new sisters. We began catching up for lost time together. A year down the line, what have we accomplished? Together, we've built communities, arranged countless cross-cultural events, established business partnerships, held cultural exchanges, supported people of determination, arranged Challah bakes, breaking bread together, celebrated holidays and birthdays, supported each other during COVID and the recent conflict, shared recipes, welcomed the first Israeli avocados to Dubai, thrown Krembo, Bamba & Bissli gatherings and the best part, Israeli children playing with Emirati children. We've achieved diplomacy of the highest level.

In my rush to depart to the UAE, I had thrown the kids' swimming bag into the luggage, and upon arrival I discovered we had accidentally transported 14 Israeli rocks, collected from the beach and the hills of Jerusalem. My children began distributing these at business meetings, as a part of a piece of our home to your home. In turn, we returned with UAE rocks which now hold a prestigious place in our living room, a part of our home!

Upon returning to Israel, my children became informal ambassadors of the Abraham Accords, educating their schools, our friends and our community with great energy. We are all creating what some deemed impossible, building a sustainable peace in our region from family to family.



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Each day we facilitate business connections in cyber, finance, fintech, sustainability, oil & gas, technology, healthcare, charity, people with determination, education and travel – the list goes on and on.

Counting the most impactful events of my life; my marriage, the birth of my children, making Aliyah to Israel and the Abraham Accords, we started with Friend-Tech and now we are family. We have peace and a very bright future together.

There are many more adventures to come, including the first blind Israeli Runner Avi Solomon. My brother and his team running will run the ADNOC Abu Dhabi Marathon in November. [You are welcome to join us to support people of determination.](#)



Follow Ariella Steinreich on Twitter @JustineZwerling

One Year to the Abraham Accords – Unlocking a New Middle East

By Dan Feferman

The Abraham Accords were a watershed moment in the history of the modern Middle East. The announcement of the accords was as much a result of a changing region as it is a key moment in ushering in a wave of positive and moderate forces, in unlocking a new Middle East.

For decades, the region has been held hostage by negative, extremist, and failed ideologies. Pan-Arabism and Islamism promised a return to a romanticized past that never really existed. “If only” the Arab and Muslim world could expel the US, or secularism, western values, or Israel’s presence, their problems would be solved. Governments waged physical, rhetorical, or diplomatic wars against Israel and these other forces, backed by state-controlled media and inculcated in the educational curriculum. Even if they didn’t believe what they were saying, they continued to use these failed ideologies to keep their populaces distracted and frustrated and keep themselves in power. Until August 2020.

After the UAE’s ambassador to Washington, Yousef Al Otaiba, published his auspicious op-ed, many of us saw this as another major piece of a puzzle – of Israel and the Arab Gulf states inching closer together. Nobody expected the peace and scope of normalization that soon followed, and whose 1-year anniversary we just celebrated.

After months of making many new friends online, I was fortunate to visit the UAE on multiple times, meet with the first delegation to come to Israel, interview numerous Emiratis for my podcast and make more friends and colleagues based in the UAE and Bahrain than I can count.

One of the reasons for the accords were the economic benefits and opportunities for both countries. It is because of this I helped found the UAE-Israel Business Council, helping to promote economic ties between our countries as a solid foundation for peace. When people begin working together, interacting positively and normally, and prospering together, they add more and more layers of peaceful relations that disagreements and regional troubles cannot easily unravel.

However, the more I got to know the UAE, its society and its government’s regional strategy, the more I realized something bigger was at play. The UAE and the Gulf Arab states have been quietly prospering, building tolerant societies, and gaining increasing regional self-confidence. While the region has been mired in conflict, self-loathing, extremism and a victimhood mentality, the Gulf has long built its own path. As it turns out, many in the region feel the same way and wish their own countries could follow suit.

The Abraham Accords had been building for some time. Many were surprised by the suddenness and the pace, but not that they occurred. They also helped unlock the beginning of a new regional dynamic. The fact that Bahrain immediately joined, followed later by Morocco and Sudan is a clear sign of this. Many across the region, certainly in the Gulf but also beyond, and many of the younger generation, are aware they were hijacked by backward thinking extremists, and want to look to the future. They espouse a positive, pragmatic and forward-looking worldview, in which working together with Israel is seen as a part of the solution and less as a part of the problem.



Dan Feferman is the Communications and Global Affairs Director at Sharaka. He is a Fellow at the Jewish People Policy Institute, a founding member of the UAE-Israel Business Council, and co-host of the Jewanced Podcast.

It is with this understanding that I was invited to join Sharaka, the Gulf-Israel Center for Social Entrepreneurship. In early August, I was fortunate to lead a delegation of Emiratis and Israelis to the US, the first such peace delegation. Sharaka was founded to bolster the foundation of people-to-people peace between Israel and the Gulf countries to ensure the success of the Abraham Accords. After a year, and after seeing our success and the success of many like-minded groups and individuals in Israel and the Gulf, we believe our model can help spread this concept to the broader region, including those countries that have yet to normalize ties with Israel. People-to-people peace can lay the foundations for more countries to join the Abraham Accords.

The Abraham Accords were both the culmination of processes long underway, and a key moment in ushering in a new, positive force in the region. I am grateful to have played, and continue playing a role in making history, in unlocking a new Middle East.

Follow Dan Feferman on Twitter @DanFeferman

The Abraham Accords Peace Institute: Building on the Historic Work of Visionary Leaders

By Robert Greenway

Throughout history, the Middle East has been a center of innovation and progress. Today, its vast natural resources, aspirational societies, and a growing population with approximately 65% under the age of 30, the Middle East is postured to move forward and seize new opportunities to build on the region's limitless potential and this transformative agreement. As we mark the first anniversary of the Accords signing it is important that we assess its impact and potential.

The Abraham Accords provide a future of peace, tolerance, and opportunity in the Middle East and around the world and represents a historic opportunity to move beyond the conflict that has inhibited progress in the Middle East since the creation of the state of Israel in 1948. To sustain and accelerate the transformation, we have established the Abraham Accords Institute for Peace as an international, non-partisan, non-profit organization dedicated to supporting the implementation and expansion of the historic peace agreement.

The mission of the Institute will be to strengthen and solidify the new bonds created through the Abraham Accords, ensure that these relationships achieve their fullest potential. The Institute will increase the probability that these relationships will flourish, conflict will subside, and new opportunities and relationships will be created. It will pursue four interdependent pillars. It will work to grow trade between the participating countries, increase tourism between the countries, foster people-to-people

development to build stronger bonds between the countries, and promote normalization through studies on the opportunities intrinsic to the Accords attracting additional signatories.

The Abraham Accords has already led to tremendous economic opportunities, which will increase prosperity and quality of life in the participating countries. As commercial ties grow, so will the strength of the bonds between the countries and their people.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Abraham Accord signatories, commercial ties between the countries have rapidly expanded. In June 2021, the Associated Press reported that over \$354 million was traded between Israel and the UAE as 25 agreements in more than 15 sectors were signed, in just the first 9 months. This is just the tip of the iceberg and as companies and their leaders grow more interdependent the decades long hostilities will lessen.

Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics has reported over \$570 million in business with the UAE alone in the last year and projections by Israel's Finance Ministry reflect it's likely to reach \$1 billion by the end of the year, and \$6.5 billion by 2025.

Already, Moody's Investors Service valued Israeli exports to the UAE at \$300-\$500 million a year, constituting 0.4 per cent of its total exports; with continued efforts UAE investments in Israel could reach \$350 million a year, about 1.9 per cent of inbound foreign direct investment. While new trade and capital flow hold the



Robert Greenway is the President and Executive Director of the Abraham Accords Peace Institute and an Adjunct Fellow at the Hudson Institute

potential to immediately benefit Accords members, they also stand to have a significant spillover effect on the entire region and broader global economy as it recovers from the pandemic.

In April 2021 Israel's Delek Drilling firm announced plans to sell its 22 per cent direct stake in the Tamar natural gas field in the Mediterranean Sea to investors led by Abu Dhabi's state-owned Mubadala Petroleum for \$1.1 billion.

In March 2021, the UAE announced the establishment of a \$10 billion fund to invest in energy and other strategic sectors of Israel's economy. In October 2020 an agreement was announced between Israel's state-owned Europe-Asia Pipeline Company (EAPC) and the newly formed UAE-Israeli Med-Red Land Bridge (MRLB) to transfer crude and oil products between the Red Sea and Mediterranean which is projected to be worth \$700-800 million when completed.

On August 31, 2020, Israel's flagship carrier El Al operated the first-ever direct commercial flight between Tel Aviv and Abu Dhabi, followed by a first flight from Israel to Manama on October 18. The UAE's Etihad Airways launched its first commercial flight to Israel a day later, on October 19. In another first, Saudi Arabia opened its airspace to the flights – and agreed to allow all such flights from Israel.

More importantly, Israel and the UAE now allow their citizens reciprocal visa-free travel. These developments have contributed to nearly 200,000 Israelis visiting the UAE over the past nine months. This figure has the potential to grow further. 4.3 million Israelis, nearly half of the country's 9.1 million citizens, traveled abroad in 2019, according to the country's Central Bureau of Statistics. Increased cooperation can multiply investment opportunities between the two states and develop the UAE's tourism industry, projecting revenue of \$85 billion by 2027 serving as a bridge for commerce, and for people-to-people relations.

Nearly 70,000 Israeli tourists visited the Emirates after direct flights were introduced last November, which will undoubtedly increase following the lifting of travel restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. The potential is enormous as some 4.3 million Israelis, nearly half of the country's 9.1 million citizens, traveled abroad in 2019, according to the country's Central Bureau of Statistics while the number of Emirati tourists projected to visit Israel could be up to 750,000.

President Donald J. Trump, joined by White House senior staff members, delivers a statement announcing the agreement of full normalization of relations between Israel and the United Arab Emirates Thursday, Aug. 13, 2020, in the Oval Office of the White House.

Official White House
© Joyce N. Boghosian

Every tourist who takes a flight between these previously disconnected countries becomes an ambassador for the Abraham Accords, regional harmony and the potential they represent for the region and the world. These individuals bring their experiences back to their communities and share them with their friends on social media. Tourism is a key driver of stronger bilateral relations, understanding between people, and commercial activity.

Reuniting Muslims, Jews, and Christians is an essential component of the Abraham Accords. This will happen partially through business and tourism, but the countries of the region would also benefit enormously from targeted programs to bolster and expedite people-to-people reconnection.

Maps of the Middle East have historically depicted the region as the center of the world's trade. For decades, this ancient leg of the Silk Road facilitating trade, economic, cultural, political, and religious links between East and West was severed due to political disagreements and a culture of distrust that threatened regional economic development and international peace and security.

The Abraham Accords, and the connections which are now possible as a result, provide an unprecedented opportunity to reorient

market access and global transportation hubs enabling improved efficiency and the establishment of trusted supply chains on terms favorable to the United States and its partners. Israel can leverage UAE as a logistical hub for market access to India and Asia, Bahrain to expand ties to Saudi Arabia, Morocco for expanded access to the EU and sub-Saharan Africa, Kosovo for access into the emerging markets of Eastern Europe, and Sudan for the horn of Africa. In return, Accords members can leverage Israel's strategic location in the Eastern Mediterranean and its access to the US market.

The Abraham Accords, and the Institute which bears its name, hold the potential to serve as the foundation for a peace process in the Middle East by demonstrating the tangible benefits of interpersonal ties, trade, commerce, and mutual cooperation. This new effort will help seize this historic opportunity to unleash the Middle East's potential and help the region turn the page on a generation of conflict and instability.

We look forward to working with the UAE-Israel Business Council, the chambers of commerce and trade councils to redouble our efforts in the coming years and build on the work of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Mohamed bin Zayed and the region's visionary leaders as they have shown us the path to peace and prosperity.



The Abraham Accords: Building on Peace-Based Ideologies

By Ahdeya Al Sayed

As we mark the first anniversary of the Abraham Accords, we recall how this day was viewed by the entire region as a transitional point towards a new Middle East. I personally remember the moment as I watched live the signing ceremony attended by Former US President Donald Trump, UAE's Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdulla bin Zayed Al Nahyan and Bahrain's Foreign Minister Dr. Abdellatif Al Zayani. And the first question that came across my mind was "did this really happen?" It was beyond both imagination and expectation.

Bahrain, Israel and the UAE are officially engaged in diplomatic relations and that was precisely what was missing in the region. Israel, a country that has continued to prove to the world that it succeeded in building a great nation based on years of hard work and dedication of its people is finally part of this great neighborhood that can embrace everyone.

And as a Bahraini, I was proud to see my country take that step. The country where I learned what coexistence is all about just proved to the world that it does not raise false slogans but truly believes in what humanity is all about.

At that moment, I went back to my classroom in the Sacred Heart School where I got my basic primary and secondary education. That classroom represented Bahrain to me. In one class, we were all one. Under the roof topped by a cross, we learned our Quran. We were all equal, Muslims, Jews, Christians, Hindus and Buddhists.

Everything I had learnt about my country was the simple reality and the signing of the Abraham Accords became the strongest indication of where we had always been and where we are heading.

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa has led our beloved country towards another great achievement that conveys to the world what Bahrain is all about.

One year has passed and we have celebrated moments of victory and pride and we have also faced challenges, those who refuse to accept change and recalculate the situation in the Middle East.

Those advocating for peace faced challenges and I'm proud to say that my beliefs could never be impacted by any challenges I faced.

You rather lead towards peace than follow ideologies that can never reap great results.

I simply chose to face any challenge because I believe that the Abraham Accords are a turning point in history, for the Palestinian people, for each and every individual in the Middle East.

Since 1979 and the so-called Islamic revolution in Iran, this region required a shift in its policies. Since the rise of extremism among all religions, this region needed to change its policies and Israel could've always been a great ally. The rise of extremist Shia ideologies led to the rise of Sunni extremist ideologies and since 1979, the rise of terrorism did not just hit the Middle East but the whole world. The region needed to create stronger alliances and Israel had to become part of a stronger alliance to face extremists and terrorism. And as much as the Jewish people have suffered from Anti-Semitism, Muslims have also suffered from Islamophobia and it's about time to work together to protect people who may feel excluded because of their religious identity anywhere in the world.



Ahdeya Al Sayed
is a Bahraini Writer
and the Arab Journalist
of the Year Award Winner 2019

The Accords marked a starting point, change of perception.

Today, it is not just the responsibility of governments to change perceptions and achieve warm peace, it is the responsibility of mothers who can choose to raise a generation of constructive individuals or a generation that chooses rejection over acceptance and embracement.

In the past year, I personally learnt a lot. These Accords will not only contribute towards stronger political economic ties but will send a strong message to the world. Ideologies built on love and peace and constructive ideologies, that is what our world needs.



Bahrain World Trade Centre
Manama, Bahrain

The Deep Roots of the Abraham Accords

By Jason Isaacson

The announcement on August 13th, 2020, that the United Arab Emirates and Israel had agreed to move toward full diplomatic relations surprised much of the world. The revelation four weeks later that Bahrain and Israel had reached a similar agreement compounded the shock.

For many in the Gulf, in Israel, and in policy circles in the United States, however, these dramatic developments represented not a sudden policy shift but rather the logical next step in a process that had been gaining momentum for decades.

Jared Kushner and others in the Trump Administration's inner circle deserve credit for looking beyond the established boundaries of political possibility and empowering those in Gulf governments (and later in Morocco and Sudan) who were ready for change. They provided inspiration and incentives that gave the drive for engagement, so obviously in the mutual best interest of the Abraham Accords parties, a necessary final push.

But what culminated last summer had deep roots. My American Jewish Committee colleagues and I, traveling regularly to Gulf capitals since 1994, observed signs of fresh thinking in the region early on – and did our part to encourage it.

We heard it some 15 years ago, sitting in the offices of a prestigious Gulf think tank, when a respected researcher described Israeli air power as the most reliable answer to the then-nascent Iranian nuclear threat.

We saw it 12 years ago, when AJC's assistance was sought in the campaign to win the UN's selection of Abu Dhabi as the headquarters site for the new International Renewable Energy Agency, with the understanding that, were the UAE chosen, an Israeli mission would be based there.

We saw it years later, when a reliable Israeli source told us of the country's roughly \$1 billion in cumulative trade, masked by creative bookkeeping and labeling, with Gulf Cooperation Council states.



Jason Isaacson is the Chief Policy and Political Affairs Officer of the American Jewish Committee

We saw it five years ago when Israeli and Emirati fighter pilots trained side by side at a U.S. Air Force base in Nevada.

Parallel to the growing recognition of the benefits of engagement with Israel among Gulf elites was an increasingly public acknowledgement – even celebration – of Jews' place in the region, both historically and contemporaneously. Nowhere was this more evident than in Bahrain, the one Gulf state with an indigenous Jewish community, when King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa in 2008 appointed Houda Nonoo, a businesswoman active in civic affairs and a proud member of that community, the island kingdom's ambassador to the United States.



Jason Isaacson receiving an album of photos from the Interior Minister of Bahrain, General Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa in 2017

© Jason Isaacson

A decade later, hardly a week went by without demonstrations of Gulf openness to Israel and the Jewish people: the public reception Sultan Qaboos bin Said accorded Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on a surprise visit to Oman; the participation of the Israeli culture minister in a sports tournament and the Israeli communications minister in a telecommunications conference, both in the UAE; public statements by the Bahraini and Omani foreign ministers suggesting that Israel should have a place in regional dialogues; the UAE's publication of *Celebrating Tolerance*, a book portraying the nation's diversity, featuring in the first position on its cover a picture of the Dubai expatriate Jewish community's president; the announcement by the Emirati foreign minister of plans to construct a spectacular "Abrahamic Family House" in Abu Dhabi, with a mosque, church and synagogue along with exhibition space and conference facilities, to drive home the message of interfaith respect and cooperation.

That partial list excludes the "Peace to Prosperity" workshop in Bahrain in June 2019, at that point the most public demonstration of two undeniable facts: first, regional elites' impatience with Palestinian leadership, perceived as having mastered political posturing but having failed as stewards of the cause of advancing peace and prosperity for their people; and, second, those elites' understanding that their countries' citizens – and, indeed, the Palestinians – would be better off if they engaged Israel, a technological and security powerhouse and a natural ally, rather than pretending the Jewish state didn't exist. The Bahraini foreign minister's interviews with Israeli journalists on the sidelines of that conference sent the clearest possible signal of openness to increasingly public engagement.

Two years later, after decades of incremental and seldom public steps, full peace has been achieved. Embassies have opened, direct flights have commenced, major investments have been announced, interfaith and cultural exchange has taken off. With the UAE foreign minister's encouragement, AJC has opened an office in Abu Dhabi, the organization's first in an Arab state.

The Middle East continues to face challenges – from Iranian aggression and nuclear ambition, religious extremism, poverty and inequality, an unforgiving climate. It's a familiar litany. But thanks to the Abraham Accords, governments committed to solving those problems have new resources and new allies. It's our responsibility to assure they succeed.

Parallel to the growing recognition of the benefits of engagement with Israel among Gulf elites was an increasingly public acknowledgement – even celebration – of Jews' place in the region, both historically and contemporaneously.



AJC delegation meeting with UAE Minister of Culture Noura Al Kaabi
November 2017
© Jason Isaacson

One Year Since the Abraham Accords: Initial Impressions and A Look Ahead

By Dr. Sarah Feuer

The passage of a year offers a useful occasion for reflection, but in historical terms it is a mere blip. We should be cautious, therefore, in assessing the normalization agreements signed last year between Israel and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, Morocco, and Sudan. (In the case of Morocco and Sudan, the agreements were inked a mere nine months ago.) Still, developments thus far permit three observations on the impact of the accords and prospects moving forward.

First, there remains considerable variation in the degree to which each agreement has been translated into tangible policies on the ground. The accord with Sudan, for example, has yielded little in the way of diplomatic exchanges or business-to-business ties. On the other end of the spectrum, the Israel-UAE relationship remains the most robust: the countries have exchanged ambassadors, implemented direct flights and signed a number of MOUs since last September, while trade between the two has increased considerably. Between 2020 and 2021, Israeli exports to the UAE jumped from \$16 million to \$181 million, and imports leapt from \$30 million in 2020 to \$342 million this year.

Situated between these two extremes are Israel's relationships with Morocco and Bahrain. Foreign Minister Lapid just returned from an official visit to Morocco, marking the first such high-level visit to the kingdom since 2003, and both countries have now reopened liaison offices which were closed in 2001 against the backdrop of the Second Intifada. Direct flights have been launched, and in July Moroccan special forces for the first time openly participated in a military exercise here in Israel.

Trade has also picked up, although not nearly to the same extent as Israel's trade with the UAE, but the potential remains considerable. For its part, Bahrain recently sent a delegation to Israel led by its Foreign Ministry's Undersecretary for Political Affairs, who met openly with top officials – including in the IDF and presided over the signing of various MOUs with Israeli research institutions. Notwithstanding their collective association, the varying levels of engagement stemming from the agreements suggest that each bilateral relationship will continue to be informed by specific interests, openings, and limitations.



Dr. Sarah J. Feuer is a fellow at the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS) and an associate fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. Since 2020, she has been advising Israeli companies on emerging opportunities in Morocco and, in turn, facilitating Arab entities' entry into the Israeli market. To learn more, visit www.feuer-advisory.com.

A second set of observations concerns Israeli-Arab normalization and the Israeli-Palestinian arena. Events surrounding the escalation between Israel and Hamas in May 2021 suggest that while existing (and perhaps even future) normalization agreements are likely to withstand relatively short-lived eruptions of violence in Gaza and the West Bank, even the most robust agreements will not remain wholly insulated from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Consider Morocco, where following the ceasefire, Prime Minister Saad-Eddine El-Othmani, who also heads the country's main Islamist party, penned a letter to Ismail Haniyeh praising the organization's "victory" over Israel in the recent fighting.

In June, Haniyeh himself traveled to the kingdom for an official visit, meeting with high-level figures in and out of the government.

Haniyeh's visit reflected internal Moroccan political dynamics rather than a desire on the part of the kingdom to walk back its opening with Israel (indeed, on the very day Haniyeh landed in Morocco, King Mohammed VI warmly congratulated Prime Minister Bennett on the formation of his government), but Morocco's diplomatic dance with Hamas suggested that Israeli-Arab normalization will not be disentangled from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict anytime soon.

A final observation concerns the United States. The normalization agreements of 2020 were facilitated through heavy American inducement, but ironically a key impetus for these developments was the very perception among regional players that America was withdrawing from the Middle East. Uncertainties surrounding America's presence in the region could make additional normalization agreements less likely to the extent Washington will be focused on more pressing matters, but insofar as other Arab states view positive ties with Israel as advantageous in the absence of a robust US security umbrella, a lighter American military footprint in the region could spur additional Israeli-Arab rapprochement. The experience of the last year suggests that the ultimate impact of normalization will depend on what Israel and its newfound allies make of it, and less so on Washington. The key – for both Israel and the Arab states which signed onto the accords – will be to demonstrate that these agreements are benefitting the populations of the countries in question.



American-Israeli delegation visit to Morocco, December 22, 2020

Former Senior Advisor to the U.S. President Jared Kushner and Former Israel's National Security Advisor Meir Ben-Shabbat signing joint declaration pledging to start direct flights between the two countries, promote economic cooperation, reopen liaison offices, and move toward full diplomatic relations

Follow Dr Sarah Feuer on Twitter @sjfeuer

The Abraham Accords and the Missing Role of the US

By Mohammed Baharoon

One year after the Abraham Accords was signed by the UAE, Bahrain, Israel, and the US on the south lawn of the White House, the Accords continue to survive and gather even more steam. Sudan and Morocco have joined the UAE and Bahrain in normalizing relations with Israel. The Abraham Accords, a year on, have exhibited resilience especially on the bilateral side but didn't develop fully into the regional approach it aspired to be.

The Abraham Accords were signed as bilateral agreements, between Israel and the UAE and Israel and the Kingdom of Bahrain separately with the US as a witness. However, its name and its focus on the entire region transcends the bilateral nature of the agreements between Egypt and Jordan with Israel.

Article 4 of the Abraham Accords indicates that "[a]n integral part of their commitment to peace, prosperity, diplomatic and friendly relations, cooperation and full normalization, the Parties shall work to advance the cause of peace, stability and prosperity throughout the Middle East". It is not solely about peace between the signatories of the Accord.

Principles like the concept of Coexistence, in article 6 of the Accords, is a means of reducing the circulation of the currency of hatred not only between the signatories but across the region. It is hatred that elevated the Palestinian-Israeli struggle to an Arab-Zionist struggle and then a struggle between Islam and Judaism. Instilling the values of coexistence inside Israel and the Arab countries can help reduce radicalization and terrorism across the region.

The Abraham Accords have seen an increase in diplomatic, economic as well as people interaction. UAE and Israel have opened diplomatic missions, established funds, signed economic deals, opened direct flight routes and exchanged youth delegations. Manama, Ribat and Khartoum also had similar activity but with less speed and intensity.

These are important steps in establishing the bilateral basis but are not yet scratching the surface of the regional aspirations of the Accords.

One year is a very short time to achieve the regional goals, and rightly so, the emphasis is on strengthening the bilateral relations. However, the fear is that the regional objective of the Abraham Accords is waning mainly so because it has lost a main supporter; Washington.

Although Biden, as a presidential candidate, was very supportive of the Abraham Accords when announced, currently the US State department avoids even using the term Abraham Accords. It is evident nonetheless, that the Biden administration is keen on supporting new negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians towards a final status, an endeavor that the Arab signatories to the Abraham Accords have publicly supported. Shaikh Abdullah Bin Zayed frequently supported the "Arab stand calling for establishing an independent Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital". However, the US clearly don't see the Accords as an enabler for peace as did President Trump.

On the other side the two states solution, which both UAE and US support is the one subject that the current government in Israel is not keen on discussing. Mr. Naftali Bennet, the current Prime Minister of Israel, has been among the first to declare the Two State Solution "dead" and sees a 1.5 state solution with no military and no border control.

This may not be the views of the entire Israeli cabinet and most certainly not of the entire Israeli population, but the views the Arab partners in peace will need to address.



Mohammed Baharoon is the Director General of B'huth at the Dubai Public Policy Research Centre

The divergence in views towards the Abraham Accords between its signatories may be similar to the parable of the blind men and the Elephant. The view of Israel that the agreement is supposed to strengthen bilateral relations, that of the US that it should be about peace between Israel and Palestine first or that of the UAE that it is a regional approach towards stability and coexistence. The elephant, however, is all of that not one part alone.

The US has an opportunity to assume a leadership role to serve its objective for a sustainable peace between Israel and Palestine by harnessing the force of the Abraham Accords rather than ignoring it.

Using the regional economic integration Israel is so keen on, and the UAE's passion for coexistence as a means for reducing polarization between Muslims and Jews, the US can harness a huge energy for peace. President Biden can start by appointing a special envoy for the Abraham Accords and use the anniversary as a way of convincing an annual summit for all the countries involved including the Palestinian Authority to help develop and support an agenda for peace that will serve the region and beyond.

Follow Mohammed Baharoon on Twitter @MABaharoon



The Burj Khalifa
Dubai, United Arab Emirates

The Sons of Abraham

Finally Playing Together

By Offer Fabian

In the winter of 2013, two guys were sitting next to each other on a bus on their way back to their hotel from the World Rugby general assembly. One was the Emirati Rugby Federation General Secretary, Qais Al Dhalai. The other, the Israel Rugby Union President, Menachem Ben-Menachem; and the conversation naturally revolved around rugby. They had so much in common but first and foremost their love for the "game they play in heaven".

"Would it not be great if one day we could have our national teams meet on the rugby pitch?" they jointly dreamt.

It was seven years later that their dream became a possibility with the signing of the Abraham Accords in August of 2020.

With keen interest on both sides, before long the technical directors of both countries engaged in dialogue discussing a first ever tour of an Israeli national team to the UAE for a joint training camp and friendly matches. It was to be part of both organizations' rugby 7s national team preparations for their pre-Olympic tournaments.

The real challenge proved to be COVID-19 with travel bans and lockdowns but as soon as a window of opportunity cracked open, the Israeli team boarded the plane for Dubai at a week's notice. In fact, they left in such a hurry that 6 players' visas were not yet processed by the computer and they could not board the plane only to fly out two days later.

The warm and hospitable welcome of the Israeli team started at the airport as they landed with UAE rugby officials waiting with a welcome sign. It didn't, however, stop with UAE rugby, as the Israeli team attracted a lot of attention and interest from the local community. In fact, the Israeli team did not stay long enough to accept all the lunch invitations received from local businessmen who wanted to show their joy and gratitude for the momentous occasion.

Rugby was the main event and the teams met for their first joint session on Wednesday March 17th. The coaches were still ironing out the final details as both teams came out to the pitch to put on their boots.



Offer Fabian
is the President of Rugby Israel



Photo of the Emirati and Israeli rugby teams after their match, March 2021
©Rugby Israel

Moran Nijem, an Israeli player, came to the physiotherapist for strapping and drew the attention of an Emirati player who came over to watch. The Emirati reached out in English to introduce himself, where to his surprise, Moran replied in fluent Arabic being a Druze (one of three in the Israeli delegation). Within minutes there was a big circle of mixed white-blue and red-green jerseys passing the rugby ball from hand to hand with smiles and laughter all around.

Friday was game day and the Emirati federation pulled out all the stops in hosting the Israeli team. A red carpet was laid from the bus stop to the changing rooms, both UAE and Israeli flags were flying high and as both teams came out to the pitch the national anthem, Hatikvah, was played for the first time in an international match on UAE soil. To everyone's surprise, Rueben Ruby Rivlin, President of Israel, addressed both teams from the giant screen just before kickoff.

Once the formal UAE-Israel game (won by Israel) was over, the teams made their way back to the dressing rooms only to emerge again as blue and white. Two teams made up of both Emiratis and Israelis playing side-by-side wearing jerseys branded UAE and Israel at the same time with only the color of their socks indicating whether a player was Israeli or Emirati.

Finally, after all these years, the Sons of Abraham were playing together.

Following the game, the Emiratis invited the Israelis out for a fun desert night experience where the Israelis took out some Challah bread and blessed over the wine and candles on the Saturday night. A wonderful moment shared by both teams who spent the evening chatting and exchanging rugby experiences.

Once again sport proved to be a joining force bringing people together and bridging cultural gaps. The teams, coaches and managers parted while promising each other this was just the first of many joint activities. Looking forward to 2022, we expect to have additional participants in our Sons of Abraham Tournament.

The endeavor was made possible thanks to the generous contribution of FIRU – Friends of Israel Rugby Union and we are welcoming others to be our friend and help facilitate this initiative

I for one will never forget this experience and the new rugby friends I made are friends for life.



Photo of the Emirati and Israeli rugby teams, March 2021

©Rugby Israel

Abraham Accords – A Year On

By Alanoud Al Hashmi

The Abraham Accords surprised us all when we heard the first announcements.

What did not surprise us was that our inspirational leaders were able to achieve more in this challenging global environment of COVID-19 to bring peace and tolerance to the forefront than anyone could have expected. We were delighted to be able to warmly welcome brothers and sisters from Israel to experience the truly inclusive environment that has been created and existed from the very beginning in the UAE.

We are a wonderful melting pot in the UAE of nearly 200 different individual nationalities, cultures, religions, faiths and beliefs, all of which have existed in a positive peaceful and supportive environment for many decades. This peaceful coexistence, I believe, provided a wonderful canvas upon which to build the formal international agreements that were required to make the Abraham Accords happen, as well as providing the confidence to all parties that the agreement would be executed in good faith.

I believe we are, after all, judged by our actions, not our words, and in the case of the Abraham Accords, those actions speak very loudly, for all to see.

As to the wider messages that are to be understood from the Accords, there is a strong theme that resonates to the world, around the requirements that we all must collaborate for our continued success, and in terms of the environment this collaboration is ultimately a requirement for our survival.

The parties to the Abraham Accords have been able to see past the narrow lens of short-term history and differences in faiths,

to harness the greater benefit of an inclusive approach to future generations.

It is my strong belief that we all need to focus as much positive energy as possible on understanding the similarities of our nations and faiths, in order to address the globally significant problems that are approaching us in the future. If we continue to follow the narrow-minded views of those who feel 'their way is the only way', then we lose the opportunity that we have if we learn how best to work together.

I feel that the Abraham Accords are a great example of how we can leave our differences behind and find those things that bind us together for a better future.

The UAE took a major step forward knowing that the journey would not always be easy and that it would not always be viewed in a positive fashion by everybody, but that the potential challenges were ones worth accepting because of the mutual benefits that could be achieved for all parties by making this agreement work.

In my own business, The Futurist Company, we have seen a very positive response from Israeli groups interested in not only discovering the areas of work we are progressing with but also interested in the technology we're developing, as well as the potential to invest in the innovations we are bringing to the marketplace across the region and globally.

The opportunity to combine the talents across all of the countries of the Abraham Accords is a new and exciting aspect of the Middle East market.

Not only have there been many instances where there are very clear synergies in the areas of business and investment, but there



Alanoud Al Hashmi is a female future-thinker and proud Emirati Founder & CEO of The Futurist Company

have also been so many positive people-to-people engagements between Emirati and Israeli friends.

One of the highlights for me, having met a number of new Jewish and Israeli friends since the signing of the agreement, was to host a Shabbat dinner at my own home.

We had the pleasure of bringing together Emirati, Israeli and other friends, who were able to take part in the whole process of sharing the traditions of our Jewish friends. This is something that we would never have thought possible only a few short years ago.

It is my hope that many more people will be able to share in the simple act of breaking bread together and building the lasting friendships that we all know are the foundations for a mutually safe and productive future.

Follow Alanoud Al Hashmi on Twitter @FutureAlanoud

Few Thoughts

From Yousif Al Hameli

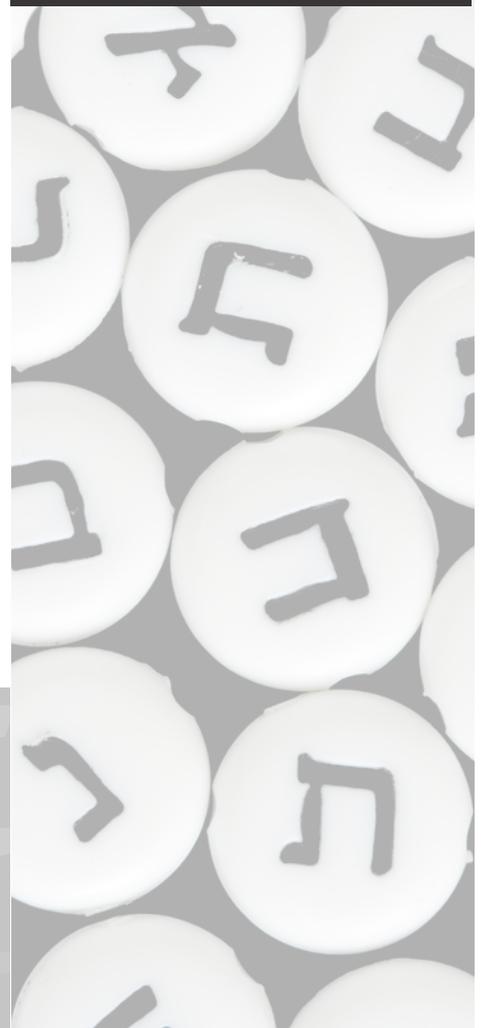
The Abraham Accords has made significant changes in the region. It has not only made an agreement between two nations to normalise their relations but it has also married two people with their powerful backgrounds in terms of economy, culture and future vision. In my case, language was a big adventure to help communicate with people who I have admired and this friendship has grown every day. With some of them, I have already shared my ups and downs, just like a family.

I figured that by learning a language, we can build special bonds between one another. Hebrew is a beautiful language and it has a lot of similarities with our language. They are both semitic languages and they share similar foundations in terms of grammar and some vocabularies.

My big dream now is to visit Israel and meet all kinds of people. I would love to share my story my with everyone who is interested in peace in this region. For all the countries that have signed this great agreement, I wish them peace, a bright future and prosperity. Shalom.



Yousif Al Hameli is the
Corporate Support Vice
President at ADNOC Refining



Follow Yousif Al Hameli on Twitter @hameli1234

Building People-to-People Peace through "Sharaka"- Partnership

By Amit Deri & Dr. Majid Al Sarrah

Last November, after the signing of the Abraham Accords, the first Israeli cultural delegation, organized by Amit Deri (one of the co-authors), came to the UAE, comprised of Israeli Jews, Muslims, Christians and Druze. The welcome this delegation received was overwhelming, to say the least, and inspired us that through the Abraham Accords, we can change perceptions throughout the region. Among the many young leaders the delegation met was co-author, Dr. Majid Al Sarrah. When Amit helped bring the first Emirati/Bahraini delegation to Israel in December of 2020, Majid was on the flight. It was during that visit we decided to form Sharaka – the Gulf-Israel Center for Social Entrepreneurship.

Sharaka means “partnership” in Arabic, or “shutfut” in Hebrew. Our very name belies our vision and goals. We wanted to create an organization whose very identity would embody our connection and our broader mission.

In 1979 and then again in 1994, Israel signed groundbreaking peace agreements with Egypt and Jordan, respectively. These were crucial agreements no doubt. The sides had fought bitter wars against one another.

However, to this day, and from the start, these remained as agreements between governments only. It is true there is no longer a state of war between the countries, and even quiet governmental cooperation. But there is not and never was people-to-people peace, or any real social, cultural or commercial ties.

We wanted to ensure that this does not happen between Israel and the Gulf states. We wanted to ensure that even when

there are tough moments ahead, policy disagreements or military conflicts, the peace treaty will remain strong and survive.

It is only when the strong foundation of people-to-people peace is solidified that the relations can survive any challenges.

We also believe, and our experience is proving us right with every passing month, that Sharaka is the answer to all those who continue to believe that sanctions and boycotts will never bring true peace and trust building between Israel and the Arab world. Only by working together, in partnership, can we show that what we are doing is a much more positive and productive model for the region.

We are now even more convinced that that model we successfully implemented between Israel and the UAE and Bahrain must be expanded. The UAE and Bahrain, and later Morocco and Sudan, took courageous steps by putting forth their hands in peace and trying a new model for the region. They provided the crucial top-down peace. Sharaka and other individuals and groups working toward the same goal are leading the bottom-up efforts. Only when the top-down and bottom-up work together, can we achieve true peace in the region.

In just a short period of time, and with Covid limiting travel and meeting opportunities, Sharaka has made history by bringing the first Gulf cultural delegation to Israel, the first Israeli cultural delegation to the Gulf, by arranging the first commemoration and education event about the Holocaust for the Arab world and, most recently, by bringing the first Israeli-Emirati delegation to the US.



Dr. Majid Al Sarrah is the CEO of Sharaka UAE

Amit Deri is the CEO of Sharaka Israel



We hope this model spreads to even more countries, including those that do not yet have relationships with Israel. By promoting people-to-people peace and normalization, we can lay the groundwork for the region's governments to be able to come together.

One year on, we can say that we have made much headway in promoting normalization between Israel and the Gulf. What is Sharaka's vision? To have Sharaka representatives and activists in every Arab country, all working to build people-to-people peace. Not a bad start so far.

Follow Amit Deri & Dr. Majid Al Sarrah on Twitter @amit441 & @DrAlsarrah

Advancing Peace Through People-to-People Connections!

By Arsen Ostrovsky

Last December, I had the opportunity to join for dinner in Jerusalem, a group of young Emirates and Bahrainis, who were visiting Israel as part of the first ever civil society delegation from the Gulf, brought to Israel by the Sharaka organization.

As I sat down at the iconic King David Hotel with the group, I noticed that they were engaged in quite animated (polite) conversation and heated debate, which was casually dispersed with asking each other to pass the various food items assorted on the table.

At that point, I just thought to myself, “wow, they are just like us. This could be any Shabbat dinner table, anywhere in Israel or basically any Jewish family across the world.”

Before personally greeting the delegation, some of whom I had only interacted with online, I had wondered how I would say hello, would it be awkward, would it be formal?

As it happens, when they saw me enter, I was greeted with the warmest of hugs and personal embraces, as if we had already been best friends for years, notwithstanding we had just met.

This was my first interaction, as an Israeli, with anyone from the Gulf, post Abraham Accords.

As the evening continued, I had the opportunity to engage further with the group, who had already visited Yad Vashem, met President Reuven Rivlin and even lit a Chanukah candle at the Western Wall. My immediate thought was how easy, free flowing and natural the conversation between us was. There was just an immediate bond and a real, authentic connection.

In a year that has been so difficult and challenging for so many people, defined by the global Coronavirus pandemic, the Abraham Accords have offered a beacon of light and hope.

It took Israel 72 years to have two peace agreements with Arab countries, Egypt and Jordan. In the space of 72 days last summer, we signed three peace or normalization agreements with three more Arab countries, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Sudan. We have since signed a fourth with Morocco.

These are truly historic times, with a paradigm shift in the recalibration of the Middle East and the Jewish state’s acceptance in the region. Gone are the days of the infamous ‘3 No’s’ of Khartoum, instead replaced with the ‘3 Yes’s’ – yes to peace, yes to negotiations and yes to recognition.



Arsen Ostrovsky is the CEO of The International Legal Forum and a Board Member of Sharaka, an NGO that was founded last year by social activists from Israel and the Gulf, in the wake of the Abraham Accords, to strengthen the bonds between young people in the region.



There is just a tremendous, palpable sense of excitement and optimism not only amongst Israelis, who yearn for peace and normalization with our Arab neighbors, but also amongst our newfound friends from the Gulf. This feeling is truly reciprocal.

One would imagine, after not having formal diplomatic relations for decades, this new-found embrace would proceed at a steady, incremental pace. But that couldn’t have been more wrong. Instead, it has been turbo speed. From direct flights, signing of MoUs, bilateral trade and cooperation on COVID-19 response, fight against global Antisemitism and even regional security threats, the sky is truly the limit.

In May this year, as I found myself in Tel Aviv rushing to the bomb shelter with my family and children after a wave of rocket attacks from Hamas in Gaza, the first people to message me to ask “are you ok?”, were my friends from the UAE. This would have been unthinkable barely a year ago, but moved me so deeply beyond words.

As the first anniversary of the Abraham Accords approaches, I have never been more hopeful, inspired and optimistic about the future and Israel’s relations with the Arab world. This is a real friendship and bond based on shared values and a mutual commitment to create a more prosperous, peaceful and tolerant society, both for today and for future generations.

Real peace cannot be imposed from political leadership above, but grown from the bottom-up. Peace is very much like a flower. It is politicians and diplomats who plant the seeds of peace, but ultimately, civil society, including young leaders, educators and business communities, that allow this peace to grow, flourish and thrive. And that is what differentiates the Abraham Accords from past agreements; this peace is being led not by the politicians, but is being driven by people-to-people connections.

“*There is just a tremendous, palpable sense of excitement not only amongst Israelis, (...) but also amongst our new-found friends from the Gulf. This feeling is truly reciprocal.*”

Arsen Ostrovsky © in Jerusalem with Dr. Majid Al Sarrah, Board Member and CEO of Sharaka UAE.



Follow Arsen Ostrovsky on Twitter @Ostrov_A

The First Anniversary of the Abraham Accords

By H.E. Ahmed Obaid AlMansoori

The anniversary of the peace initiative highlights a milestone of a new MENA region that is going towards political stability, economic prosperity, and harmonious cultural understanding. The birth of such visionary strategic initiative is particularly significant in a region which is historically characterised by instability, tension and an inability to solve its problems through diplomatic means. Moreover, this strategic development was taken during a global pandemic, in some of the toughest times for the region, in all aspects of life; economically, socially and culturally. Therefore, globally, the launch of peace between the state of Israel and the United Arab Emirates was the highlight of global hope that humanity can find their way, even in the toughest of times, and lead their destiny towards what is best for future generations, bypassing all obstacles and meeting all challenges. The brave, inspiring, and charismatic leaders with wisdom and vision were all what was needed to make such a breakthrough.

The success of the Israeli-UAE Peace accords can be seen in many areas. From the first phone call between leaders in a superb which embarked a positive generative way forward; horizontally across all sectors and vertically between groups and individuals, and continues to evolve progressively in a way flourishing as the never imagined peace between both countries. Many success stories of the peace are reflected in both countries' economic, cultural and social sectors and even in advanced science and technology projects.

The announcement of the Abraham Accords was another crucial decision pioneered by the leaders of my country. This is because it opened the door for others to follow suit. The institutionalisation of the relationship between the State of Israel and the United Arab Emirates will pave the way for regional stability, growth and prosperity. This is because there will be regional platforms located in the MENA region that will be able to tackle regional challenges whether political, security, economic and/or legal, by regional players sitting on one table talking with one another directly, without mediators and brokers.

Accordingly, each country will be able to align its agenda and interests regionally and with other actors in the region. Strategically, this is the beginning of automatic movement to set a vision that “no regional rival is a threat to others”. By such spirit, peace will finally establish itself.

The above political and diplomatic platforms, councils and institutions, will for the first time be built at a people-to-people level, sector-to sector level, between two countries that have just established diplomatic relationship, at the dawn of peace. This is a second milestone towards a new MENA, that the will of two people is playing a strong role towards making MENA great again.

One of concrete projects that I was and am still involved in, is the Crossroads of Civilizations Museum (CCM).



Ahmed Obaid AlMansoori is the Founder of the Crossroad of Civilizations Museum.

“
The launch of peace between the state of Israel and the United Arab Emirates was the highlight of global hope that humanity can find their way, even in the toughest of times
”

To give a brief background, the CCM was founded in 2012 with a mission to reflect the culture of the UAE and its values of openness, harmony, mutual respect, and multiculturalism. The museum's collection honors the many civilisations that have passed through the region, and the interplay of travelers, traders, and Bedouin people that comprises the unique history of Dubai in particular and the UAE in general.

The role of the museum is highlighted below:

- Also the CCM organised and co-hosted with the Heritage Center the first conference, entitled "Historical Kinship and Future Alliances".
- The CCM signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Heritage Center of Jewry of the Middle East to promote both nations by promoting the positive heritage, history and culture of both.
- The CCM has hosted and co-organised with the Heritage Center of Jewry of the Middle East the first exhibitions about the origins of Jews in the MENA region as indigenous nation as their Arab brothers and cousins living side by side historically.
- The CCM has built the first Holocaust Memorial Permanent Gallery in the MENA region.
- The CCM has organised and managed two Holocaust memorial events with the Jewish Community in the UAE.

All of the above are signs that we in the MENA region understand that we, as humanity, share one destiny and the challenges ahead of us are beyond our differences. Therefore, we need to unify our efforts and resources, leaving a legacy to empower future generations to meet future challenges, for the sake of a better future and world.

All of the above are signs that we, in the MENA region, understand that we, as humanity, share one destiny and the challenges ahead of us are beyond our differences.



Photo of the MoU between the Crossroads of Civilizations Museum and the Heritage Center of Jewry of the Middle East UIBC ©

Abraham Accords First Anniversary

By H.E. Omar Al Suwaidi

On this blissful and charming day of the formation and signing of the Abraham Accords Declaration. We wish to offer our wise Leaderships and Governments, which have proven throughout history that they are the shining beacon in the face of the storms of challenges, our deepest congratulations on the anniversary of one of their bravest decisions of the 21st century, as they have always come back with courageous decisions to move us to the optimal space. Our leaders and government have always played a pivotal role in the region. Hence their positive impact, which is due to the distinctive features and characteristics of the Emirati personality, which never stops in the pursuit of the best and the search for more opportunities and reasons for advancement.

Adopting the Abraham Accords will lead to a more prosperous and peaceful future for both our nations and for the entire region. Marking one year since the declaration for peace and diplomatic relations among the nations, the anniversary brings with it fond memories of the potential for future growth and business. The initiative by the United Arab Emirates and Israeli leaders in taking this step to normalize their relations is highly commendable.

His Highness Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, was outstanding and vocal during the signing of the Accords towards peace and unity for the region. His Influence and voice towards bringing the regions together has been commendable and demonstrates how the unity among these nations would tremendously lead to future growth.

The Abraham Accords have already opened a wide range of opportunities for the nations. Regional peace has been among the top priorities for the nations, as they vowed to protect their diplomatic relations, normalize all activities amongst them, uphold peace and enhance the economic development of the area. The Accord has been associated with huge development in terms of growing trade relationships between the nations. The links that have been opened to business and trade centers, depicts healthy progress of the nations in creating avenues where economic growth and partnerships can be established and developed.

We congratulate our people who lined up behind our wise Leadership to prove to the world that the Emirati is the ambassador of peace.



H.E. Omar Al Suwaidi
Group President - United Stars Group
Executive Director – Private Office of
Sheikh Mohamed Bin Hamed Al
Hamed Private Office
Strategic Partner – Gulf-Israel Green
Ventures

We were and are still, with what we learned from His Highness Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, may his soul rest in peace, by following his path towards a better tomorrow and by learning that the impossible is possible. May they continue to inspire us for many years to come with success and pride!

As it is known success never comes in a day, it comes with strong determination and with great hard work. The business community from both the United Arab Emirates and Israel's side has played a significant role in championing the establishment of the Abraham Accords.

Therefore, their outstanding efforts must be recognized and applauded for the dignity they have established and demonstrated in enacting this avenue for collective growth and peaceful development. We commend their courageous efforts and the way they challenged the difficulties they faced while building bridges with new nations even though they share almost the same cultures. The Abraham Accords have significantly come as a beacon of hope to the nations to engage in constructive partnerships meant for the sustenance of their relationships and foster economic empowerment. Therefore, the business community can sit and reflect on the early steps that have happened in this development and ponder on the new measures that would still grow unity and the trade factor in the region.

The anniversary of the Abraham Accords marks a period when the nations can look into the future and offer honest discussions on how this partnership would stabilize their peace, security and expand opportunities for the desired economic frontier. Further, the partnership brings into the picture the need for other nations to follow suit and establish amicable relations for the sustenance of world peace.

The Abraham Accords have brought a great deal of peace to the nations, more so than ever before. As such, we can only congratulate and continue to give the best wishes to the United Arab Emirates and Israel for their cooperation and hope for the best fruition into the future. We would like to thank the UAE-Israeli Business Council and wish them the best. As evident from the declaration, "the nations pursue a vision of peace, security, and prosperity." This aligns with the core mandate of the Accords.



Asher Fredman, CEO of Gulf-Israel Green Ventures, and HE Omar AlSuwaidi, President of United Stars Group, sign first MoU for UAE-Israel greentech collaboration, April 2021 © United Stars Group

Follow H.E. Omar Al Suwaidi on Twitter @Yassi_SS

Partners, Pandemics & Prosperity

By Jon Medved

Israel and the United Arab Emirates led the world in the coronavirus vaccination campaign. For months after the vaccinations against Covid-19 were first approved and distributed, these two small Middle Eastern countries dominated the Oxford University. Our World in Data charts for the number of jobs each administered relative to the size of their population.

The striking success that set them so far ahead of the pack might once have been dismissed as a coincidence, but since the Abraham Accords first officially connected Israel and the UAE together in September 2020, we are witnessing the start of a new trend. Get ready to start seeing our two countries mentioned in the same breath as the new Middle East leads the world in innovation and positive impact.

It is as if a Sand Curtain across the Middle East, like the Iron Curtain that so cruelly divided Europe for 30 years, has been torn down, reuniting natural partners at either end of the region.

The Abraham Accords were dismissed at first by many observers as a forced marriage, if not a shotgun wedding, thrown together in a flurry of US inspired diplomatic activity. Now, it seems inspired, organic and warmly familial.

Even in a deeply divided US, there is bilateral support for the normalization of relations between Israel and the Arab states. "I think the Abraham Accords is something that's positive. Normalization between the Arab states and Israel changes the landscape for the better," Dennis Ross, veteran Middle East peace envoy for Presidents Clinton, Bush and Obama, told the BBC.

By the end of June, just 10 months after signing the Accords, bilateral trade between Israel and the UAE soared more than 100 percent to \$675 million, Israel's Foreign Minister Yair Lapid told the Emirates WAM press agency. "It is estimated that the bilateral trade potential will multiply many times over in the coming years," Lapid said. Multi-million-



Jon Medved is the Founder and CEO of OurCrowd, based in Jerusalem.

dollar investment deals between Israeli and Emirati investors and entrepreneurs have already been signed and many more are pending.

Between lockdowns forced on air travel by the pandemic, many thousands of citizens of both countries flocked to visit the other on more than 100 flights scheduled each week.

The honeymoon is barely over, but it is already clear that this partnership is solid. Israel and the UAE will increasingly be yoked together as we explore new frontiers in business, science, education and diplomacy.

As the two original partners in the Abraham Accords lead the way out of the Covid-19 pandemic (closely followed by Bahrain, the third signatory), we expect more successes to follow.

For decades, Israelis and Emiratis eyed each other through opaque lenses that prevented them from seeing how much they have in common as two small entrepreneurial nations who have embraced education and technology to build modern economies based on knowledge and science. Released from decades of public downplay, Israel and the UAE are creating a partnership of prosperity that will warm the economies of both countries and transform the lives of millions in the region.

The two countries share a similar population size, an efficient, centralized health system, governments that can move fast in a crisis, faith in technology and progress, an entrepreneurial spirit, and a deep-rooted sense of national community.

OurCrowd was the first Israeli investor to start operations in the UAE and appoint an Emirati as a senior partner.

In just a few months, Dr. Sabah al-Binali has expanded OurCrowd's operations in the Emirates, helping to create business ties between OurCrowd portfolio companies and Emirati partners and investors, and identifying the first Emirati startups to be added to the OurCrowd investment portfolio.

As we create new investments in science, technology and health, our two nations together will produce much more than the sum of their individual parts.

Like other small nations punching above their weight class in education and technology, Israel and the UAE are sharing ideas and resources and inspiring each other. Our experience, and the example of other countries like Switzerland, New Zealand and Singapore, demonstrate the ability of small, modern, technology-focused states to lead and have an outsized global impact.

The Middle East was the cradle of modern civilization, monotheism and mathematics. Like their namesake, the Abraham Accords will be judged not by their benefit for Israel or the UAE, or even the region – but for the world.

“It is as if a Sand Curtain across the Middle East, like the Iron Curtain that so cruelly divided Europe for 30 years, has been torn down, reuniting natural partners at either end of the region.”

Follow Jon Medved on Twitter @jonmedved



Tel Aviv, Israel

A Road Less Travelled

By Zeyad Almajed

Fifteen years prior to the signing of the Abraham Accords, I recall a session during the World Economic Forum in Jordan, where I sat at a round table with some delegates from several countries. Across the table sat an Israeli delegate. He smiled at me and said, "congratulations on 40 dollars a barrel". I laughed and said "Thank you Sir, but we are trying hard to get rid of the need for oil". He laughed and said "come to Israel, we will show you how". The delegate was a Mr. Yosi Vardi who I came to know as one of the founders of the Israeli venture capital industry and a great tech investor. We interacted and talked about science, technology, economy and innovation, not only as means for economic development, but also as means for building a culture that is grounded in reality, pragmatism and inclusivity.

We can only build bridges across cultural, religious, ethnic or historic divides, if we remember that our first identity is a Human identity. We are born a self-conscious awareness embodied in a biological machine that functions everywhere on this earth. Our first identity is a "Human Being". Our first country is "Planet Earth". Other identities are constructed or acquired later to preserve certain ways of speech, methods of worship, and of economic interdependence.

In this "Human being on planet Earth" context, human welfare and environmental stewardship will take precedence over ethnic, social or religious divides and we can truly become global citizens yet with a distinct cultural identity.

I will highlight two areas of opportunities for the next 10 years that we can work on in the Gulf and Israel aside from mainstream businesses. I am here giving my own personal view in light of modern trends:

1- Biology will generate half of the world's economic inputs in the next 20 years, according to a McKinsey Global Institute report on the bioeconomy. The 21st century will be dominated by Information Technology, Energy, and Biotechnology and these three will be the makers or breakers of national sovereignty. Israel is comfortable in the information technology realm, while the UAE is deeply entrenched in the conventional and non-conventional energy industry. But Biology is the next big thing, and it is being used to make food (cellular ag, alternative proteins, etc), medicine (mRNA drugs, precision and personal medicine) and materials (replacement of petrochemicals with biochemicals, textiles without agriculture etc), and while we see tremendous effort in our universities in biotechnology research, I still believe the private sector participation is negligible and government support minimal. The size of the 21st century bioeconomy will eclipse everything we have seen so far, and we have to rise to the occasion. We cannot afford to wait 5 or 10 years until university science becomes "business ready". We have to bridge academic research with industry, do it proactively and do it now.

2- Education and Youth empowerment. No wealth on this planet is more valuable than a peaceful, intelligent and self-empowered individual. The MENA region seems to struggle with the onslaught of technology and content that it deems contrary to its traditional values. Yet we have little effort, private or government, to build digital content and engagement programs for the MENA youth. There are national initiatives in several countries but nothing on a MENA wide scale.

There is clearly a need for multilingual, (English, Arabic, Hebrew, Syriac) multi-



Zeyad Almajed is a life sciences and bioeconomy expert bridging cutting edge science with business. He is actively engaged in the setup and building of cellular agriculture and synthetic biology ventures.

religious and multicultural content that can cover the cultural tapestry that is the Middle East and its large and growing population. We don't know what that content will look like, but we must have faith in human creativity and ingenuity. We need to seed and reward content creators instead of burdening them with unreasonable financial and regulatory barriers. In an era of fiat digital currencies and ideas about universal basic income, culture and creativity has to be considered its own standalone currency. With nearly a quarter of a billion youth under 30 years of age in our region, there is a golden opportunity to reach out and build a new generation of self-empowered, responsible and joyful citizens. We need governments and the private sector to seize the opportunity and unlock the richness of the Middle East multicultural heritage.

I am confident that these two areas will receive due attention and momentum and look forward to exciting business partnerships. Together we can make a landmark difference and create a bright new Middle East.

First Anniversary of the Abraham Accords: UAE, Israel and FinTech

By Jonny Paul

As COVID-19 cast its shadow of misery and upheaval, a chink of light and hope heralded what could be a new dawn in the Middle East. The establishment of relations between Israel and the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain was a truly historic moment, with the normalisation of relations between Israel and both the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, bringing a paradigm shift to the region, and abundant opportunity to the fintech sector.

In December 2020, I sat in a conference hall at GITEX 2020 in Dubai and watched UAE and Israeli government officials, business leaders and dignitaries sharing a stage. It was an emotional and seminal moment and one I never dreamed I would see.

Israel is globally recognised as an innovation hub, with a thriving entrepreneurial culture, dynamic start-up ecosystem and deep pool of talent. The UAE and Bahrain are dynamic business centres with affluent economies, advanced infrastructure and connectivity, not to mention even warmer weather.

Almost immediately the two principle financial centres in the UAE established partnerships with Israeli entities.

Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) formed an agreement with Bank Hapoalim, one of Israel's oldest and largest banks, to join DIFC's global network of banks, financial centres, regulators and fintech players.

Abu Dhabi Global Market (ADGM) also entered an agreement with Bank Hapoalim to collaborate in the fintech space and support start-ups scaling across the UAE and Israel, while the Abu Dhabi Investment Office (ADIO) has opened an office in Israel to promote cooperation and investment opportunities. Fintech Week Tel Aviv has established strong working relationships with these institutions. ADGM and DIFC were headline sponsors of Fintech Week Tel Aviv 2021 and ADIO was a major contributor.

The Israel Securities Authority (ISA), the securities regulator of Israel, has signed a fintech cooperation agreement with ADGM's Financial Services Regulatory Authority to establish "a more connected, collaborative network to meet the demands of our growing fintech ecosystem". Richard Teng, CEO of ADGM Financial Services Regulatory Authority, said, "I look forward to working closely with our partner to



Jonny Paul is the Founder & Director of Fintech Week Tel Aviv

bring forward a more connected, collaborative network to meet the demands of our growing FinTech ecosystem."

As major FinTech hubs, there is considerable mutual benefit on offer to Israel and the UAE as a result of cooperation and collaboration with the ongoing digitalisation of financial services. Neo-banking, payments, fraud prevention, AI and machine learning, insurtech and emerging applications for blockchain are areas that are ripe for collaboration.

A key focus will be on how technology companies at the cutting edge within their respective FinTech ecosystems can work together, and even build a regional ecosystem. Open access to each other's markets would be the ultimate sign that that economic ties between the former adversaries are truly established.

The issue of open markets may require more than just warm relations. Financial services markets in Israel, the UAE and Bahrain are relatively closed to non-national players. Considering the extent to which regulation changes in these countries would allow, for example, consumer-facing companies to operate in each other's territories, may be an unrealistic goal at this point. Nonetheless, companies will likely engage in selling upstream technologies, the sort of area for which Israel is renowned. They may also enter into cross-border partnerships and finance consumer-facing companies through minority stakes and other co-operation agreements, an activity for which the UAE, for example, has demonstrable prowess.



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The combination of Israeli technological innovation with the UAE's financial expertise and international reach could turn the region into a global powerhouse of FinTech capability
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The combination of Israeli technological innovation with the UAE's financial expertise and international reach could turn the region into a global powerhouse of FinTech capability with world-beating technology and sector-defining companies. The warming of relations between Israel and some of its neighbours may well be the start of a broader regional thaw. Those companies that will have had an early opportunity to operate under this new co-operation environment may well have a head start if a broader arena were to open up in the Middle East. The Middle East could turn out to be on the start; other much more populous Asian countries could well join the fold, and the wider world can only benefit from this.



Follow Jonny Paul on Twitter @StrummerJonny

Creating a Bridge between the Entrepreneurship Ecosystems of Israel and the UAE

By Shahar Matorin

In October 2020 a group of Israeli entrepreneurs, led by the founder of one of Israel's most prominent VCs, traveled to Dubai with the purpose of meeting peers from the local ecosystem following the freshly minted Abraham Accords between Israel and the UAE. They were driven by curiosity and a healthy sense for spotting business opportunities. The thing is, there were no business ties between Israel and the UAE at the time. They were going to start forming such ties themselves and they could use some quality introductions that would yield in meaningful interactions, learning, and opportunities. To that end, while planning the trip, the VC called the Israeli best positioned to assist; Mr. Shahar Matorin, Israel Director at Startup Grind.

Startup Grind is the world's largest community of startups, founders, innovators, and creators. Its chapters and countries are led by directors who have over the years formed family-like ties among themselves. Upon hanging up the phone with the VC, Shahar Matorin called Damu Winston, Director of Startup Grind Dubai, who was happy to host the group at a chapter event he organized for them, and make further introductions to prominent members of the local ecosystem to the satisfaction of everyone involved.

Eighty years ago, Shahar Matorin opened the Tel Aviv chapter of Startup Grind and since then, along with a team of volunteers, he has been organizing monthly networking and content meetings which help community members learn, get inspired, and connect with the most relevant members of our super-active ecosystem. He has also been listening to entrepreneurs' challenges, needs and opportunities, and representing the Israeli startup community around the world.

Impressively, as the community grew, strengthened, and matured, it began to help not only fresh startups but also unicorns, VCs, and CEOs build meaningful relationships and trust at a global level.

With over 5 million community members in over 120 countries, Startup Grind's mission is to give startups everywhere the education and opportunities they need to build, grow, and scale their companies. It fosters community-building by promoting the values of making friends, not contacts; giving first, not taking; and helping others before helping oneself. It allows entrepreneurs to connect not only in monthly events (both in-person and virtual), but also in annual regional and global conferences, incubator programs, and more.

Startup Grind is a non-profit, and its operations rely heavily on volunteer work, partnerships with organizations, and sponsorships. Yet with its strong global brand name, there's no wonder that over the years companies such as Google, Oracle, Amazon, American Express, Dell, and Udemy have sponsored its global activities.

Over the year that has elapsed since the signing of the Abraham Accords, Shahar Matorin worked together with the Startup Grind chapter directors at Dubai and Abu-Dhabi, as well as with other UAE ecosystem players introduced to him through the global community, to create a bridge between the entrepreneurship ecosystems of Israel and the UAE, upon which he hopes many entrepreneurs will tread safely to develop their own personal and business networks and promote solutions to the challenges of the entire region. Shahar Matorin leads the community as his own lifelong project, and he believes that living daily by its values is a



Shahar Matorin is the Israel Country Manager of Startup Grind

critical element in his ability to connect well all across the globe and at every stage of his own entrepreneurial journey, from idea and guidance, through to money-raising and the recruiting of the first employees, and all the way to collaborations and strategic partnerships.

The times of Covid-19 have forced the community to continuously work on maintaining its relationship-building capabilities in a myriad of ways and under various conditions.

While introductions in both directions are being made all the time, virtual cross-chapter events featuring well-known speakers from each country that took place and that will take place during Covid-19 times, will certainly blaze the trail for in-person events when the pandemic is under control and gatherings and global travel bounce back. The value of the prolonged efforts and hard work by all sides, compounded by the Startup Grind brand's strength, have resulted in a bridge between the two communities that is strong and long-lasting. Even though new strains of Covid-19 are spreading across the globe, there's light at the end of the tunnel, and it's growing stronger.

It's important for founders, entrepreneurs, and startups worldwide to remember that there is a huge community dedicated to helping them succeed. The more they share their needs, challenges, and opportunities with the community, the easier it will be for the community to give them value.

United to Create a Better, More Inclusive Society

By Kalman Samuels

In the heart of Jerusalem there is a magnificent building where all are welcome. The glass façade and an expansive three-story atrium with a mobile of colorful butterflies seemingly fluttering about creates a harmony between the life taking place inside and outside the building. All who enter its doors are enveloped by a heartwarming sense of home and an exhilarating, yet peaceful energy of hope. The Shalva National Center is one of the largest centers in the world for disability care and inclusion where thousands of children and adults with disabilities and their family members receive care, support, and empowerment to become agents of their own change in creating a better, more inclusive society.

At the onset of the Abraham Accords, Shalva immediately began developing partnerships with organizations and government bodies in the UAE and in February 2021 we co-hosted a joint seminar on early intervention care for infants with disabilities and their families. The experience of working together with our newfound partners in the UAE was very meaningful and powerful. While the mutual benefits of sharing knowledge and collaboration became clear instantly, the multifaceted impact of the relationships and opportunities created will multiply and unfold for years to come.

Shalva's relationship with the UAE to advance disability care and inclusion is testament that the Abraham Accords is not only about normalization, diplomatic relations, and developing joint business ventures. We are working together, united to create a better, more inclusive society.

This past July I had the pleasure of hosting an international delegation of online influencers, artists, and change-makers who visited the Shalva National Center as part of their tour of Israel. The delegation included personalities from the UAE, Bahrain and Morocco.

Together, we toured Shalva's facilities, met some of the children and adults in our programs, and enjoyed a performance by the Shalva



Kalman Samuels is the founder of Shalva, the Israel Association for Care and Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, an NGO providing rehabilitative services to individuals with disabilities, support services to their families, and promoting social inclusion. He recently authored a memoir called 'Dreams Never Dreamed'

Shalva recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the UAE-Israel Business Council to create a framework for sharing of knowledge and collaboration to advance research, education, and the development of services to benefit People of Determination in the United Arab Emirates and Israel.

As I sat alongside the leading personalities of the UIBC with Abdullah Baqer joining on Zoom from the UAE, I was both humbled and proud of the journey we have taken and the road we will continue to travel together.

Meaningful moments like these prompt reflections of how far we've come...as individuals, as nations, as humanity. And yet, in the same breath, these moments spiral into an inspired frenzy of all the amazing opportunities ahead.

When my wife Malki and I founded Shalva in 1990, we began as a small group of six local children in a rented apartment and little did we know that one day Shalva would become one of the leading international players in advancing the field of disability care and inclusion.

Thirteen years earlier, our infant son Yossi was injured by a faulty vaccine which rendered him blind, deaf and acutely hyperactive.

We spent years exhausting every effort to penetrate his world of darkness and silence, and when he was eight years old Yossi experienced a remarkable breakthrough to communication. Yossi learned to communicate through sign language in the palm of the hand and was eagerly soaking up the world around him.

Amidst the thrill of Yossi's achievements, Malki recalled a personal promise that she made during the most isolating years of Yossi's childhood; to help other families and children coping with disability.

Shalva was founded to fulfil this mission and we developed new programs to optimally meet every need that surfaced. Eventually, our programs became models for country-wide initiatives and were instrumental in influencing the ever-evolving social policies surrounding the legal severance of rehabilitative services for people with disabilities.

Today Shalva has over 2000 direct-care beneficiaries from birth through adulthood with projects impacting thousands more around the world. The Shalva Institute's research collaborations and educational initiatives have given us the ability to reach audiences globally with sharing information, offering consultation and formal and informal learning opportunities. Through Shalva's consultative status to the United Nations and emerging collaborations with countries around the world, we have developed partnerships with immense potential.

In addition to joint projects and ideas, Shalva and the Abraham Accords have a lot in common. We've learned that in order to reach our full potential, we must work together. We believe that a strong, unified society rests upon the acceptance of one another's differences. We've proven that the power of the human spirit transcends all stigmas and that when you see abilities there are endless possibilities.



Photo of the MoU signed between Shalva and the UAE-Israel Business Council, Shalva ©

Culture Collaboration and Coexistence - a View into the Successes of the Abraham Accords 2021

By Nader Sabry

This past year which is the first year of the Abraham Accords has been groundbreaking.

From opening new doors, to forming solid long-term relationships, the foundation of this past year's success has been not business or investment but rather the cultural exchange, which is the binding agent of the Abraham Accords.

This exchange has created a forum for discussion, a place for creating tolerance, and, most importantly, friendship creation. Cultural differences can always be challenging, but when all parties find a middle ground, opportunities flourish.

For me, on a personal level, it has been finding a new friend who has become a lifelong friend, and that is rare. Especially when I lost another lifelong friend, it was a very powerful experience for me.

I continue to learn, connect new dots, and find new friends. We have so much in common, and to gain from one another, it doesn't make sense for us to be on different teams but rather one big family.

These Accords will open doors not even imaginable, that everyone will prosper from directly and indirectly. The future for these Accords will enable not just business and investment to happen, but other forms of collaborations that will push both sides forward.



Nader Sabry is a keynote speaker, strategist, innovator and the author of *Ready Set Growth Hack*

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Follow Nader Sabry on Twitter @Nadd

Together against online fraud

By CyTaka

Doron Amir, CEO of CyTaka, believes that competition in Dubai will provide a great platform for globalization and a wonderful bridge between the Muslims and Jews and people in general around the world

With the growing threat of ransomware and online fraud and as more people are working remotely, the need for cybersecurity has grown more crucial than ever. Having multiple – and often creative solutions – to treat threats in the cyber world has become essential in these times. One Israeli group led by Mr. Doron Amir (Founder and CEO of CyTaka) realized the need for these increased solutions. CyTaka is holding a cyber competition in Dubai on (the last event was in August 15, 2021) where its platform will present a system of challenges for software programmers to assess their cyber capabilities. These exercises will pose threats, which contestants must solve by combining information security knowledge and cybersecurity solutions. It also gives new contestants a chance to spot their weaknesses, assess their performance level, diagnose their skills, and increase their chances of finding a job in this highly demanding field. CyTaka will award 10 contestants with monetary prizes each month.

By our App CyTaka with gamified cybersecurity-focused coding education and training specifically for software developers we are calling participants from any region, gender, or educational level can participate. The app is offered at four levels: Beginner, Student, Professional, and Expert. At each level, the player needs to complete clearly defined challenges. The challenges are not static; they change and evolve based on the latest developments in software engineering, cybersecurity, and IT experts.



Doron Amir
is the CEO of CyTaka

Friendship as a Universal Language Leading to Peace

By Salomé Zajbert

When I walk home at night, I appreciate talking on the phone. My first pick is always one of my dearest Kuwaiti (insomniac) friends. I met him when I had the chance to join the Embassy of France in Kuwait for a six-month internship. I still can't believe that we've become so close, even though we come from opposite ends of the world and have been raised in such different ways. I've never felt so connected to someone. Kuwait can be a very welcoming country to foreigners, if they respect a few essential rules.

The recipe of our friendship hasn't any surprising ingredients: attentiveness, open-mindedness, and support for each other. It's about seeing the human being behind the label of our nationality. It sounds simple, yet nowadays it may be more complicated than we think, in times when ultra-nationalism and extremism are ever growing while trying to ensure that everyone titles its nation "correctly". Now is the time to remember that we are all humans. That's why the Abraham Accords are so meaningful to me.

When my friend and I talk, we love to imagine what the Middle East would look like if there were to be a regional peace, if we could find a equitable solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and live together side by side. Whilst it may sound like a utopia to some, believing is the first step in achieving a lasting peace.

We usually prefer video calls so I can show him the beauty that is Jerusalem. "I want to visit," he says. We discuss the practicalities of visas, flights and border security. I'm looking forward to the day when he would just have to hop on a direct flight and be able to hug me three hours later. The peace that the Abraham Accords has brought has a powerful impact on everyone's life, not just for a happy few. The day they were announced, I finally felt that we were coming closer to this idea of the "New Middle East" opening up a discussion on ways to reach this goal.

When the Abraham Accords were announced, I had already worked for a year on my master thesis about relations between Israel and the Gulf countries. Towards the end of 2019, and early 2020 I had led interviews with people from Kuwait, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Qatar without knowing what I was allowed to ask and how direct I could be. The Abraham Accords has helped my research by enabling me to talk frankly with nearly forty people, both supporting the Accords and opposing them.

I hope the Abraham Accords will bring even more than the normalization of diplomatic relations and active cooperation between the signatories. I am confident that they will lead us down a common path towards regional peace.



Salomé Zajbert
is the Administrator of the
UAE-Israel Business Council.
She graduated from Sciences Po
Paris and INALCO in Middle Eastern
Studies.

It is not enough to wait and see, we should all make peace our own agenda, even in our everyday life. That's the reason why I've joined the UAE-Israel Business Council and the Gulf-Israel Women's Forum, to actively participate in initiatives that contribute to open dialogue and the building of joint projects that support peace.

The road may be long and winding, but it doesn't mean we should not make the journey. I want to be optimistic. I want to continue to meet with people who both agree and disagree with me, people who challenge my beliefs and people from whom I can learn. As such, I'll continue to call my friend at night, from the Gulf and elsewhere, to remind me that we are actually closer than we initially thought.

Follow Salomé Zajbert on Twitter @Zajbert2



The Dead Sea, Israel

Our leaders signed the Abraham Accords with a vision to bring sustainable peace and prosperity to the region. Now, it is up to us to help make that vision a reality.



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