



# GCC IN REVIEW

*A Weekly Publication of the main news surrounding the GCC States*

**11-15 September 2017**

## **Kingdom of Bahrain**

Wednesday, 13 September—Bahrain’s Interior Minister Lt-General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa held a meeting with the governors and the General Coordinator of Governorates. Among the security issues discussed, the meeting focused on the importance of local efforts to tackle terrorist activities.

Thursday, 14 September—Bahrain’s King Hamad bin Isa bin Salman Al-Khalifa met officials in the presence of Works, Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning Minister Essam Khalaf. The King hailed the successful efforts of his country in the fields of economic growth urban development and income diversification.

\*\*\*

## **Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**

Monday, 11 September—Saudi Arabia’s King Salman bin Abdulaziz has received Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in his office at Salam Palace in Jeddah. Lavrov conveyed greetings from Russian President Vladimir Putin to King Salman before discussing bilateral relations. Differences on the Syrian war and support to Kuwaiti mediation efforts to end the boycott of Qatar were high on the agenda.

Monday, 11 September—Saudi Arabia’s Energy Minister, Khalid A. Al-Falih, agreed with his UAE counterpart on the possibility of extending the agreement to cut world oil supplies

after March 2018. The Saudi minister previously held talks on the same issue with his Venezuelan and Kazakh counterparts.

Wednesday, 13 September—Saudi state news agency SPA announced the arrest of 20 influential preachers and religious scholars by KSA’s authorities. The arrested are accused of having engaged in destabilizing activities on behalf of foreign parties.

Wednesday, 13 September—Saudi Arabia’s ambassador to Egypt and delegate to the League of Arab States, Ahmed Kattan, declared Qatar will regret its relations with Iran as the Ayatollahs’ regime is the enemy of all the Arab states in the Gulf. Such declaration came in response to a statement by Qatari Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Sultan bin Saad al-Marikhi. During the 148th Foreign Ministers’ ordinary session at the Arab League Council Al-Marikhi described Iran as an “honourable country” and phrased Qatari efforts to boots relations with the Islamic Republic.

Thursday, 14 September—Colonel Turki bin Saleh al-Malki, spokesman of the Saudi-led coalition which aims to restore Yemen’s legitimate government, discussed reports of plans by the Houthi militias to dislodge their ally, former president Ali Abdullah Saleh, from the capital Sana’a. He commented that, if carried out, the Houthi move, would signify the solidification of Iran’s control over northern Yemen.

\*\*\*

## **State of Kuwait**

Thursday, 14 September— Kuwait’s law reinstating mandatory national military service in the country took effect once again, after it had been suspended for 16 years. Under the compulsory legislation, Kuwaitis aged 18 and above are required to join military service. The reinstatement of mandatory military service in Kuwait signals government concerns with the ongoing regional wars and with the weakening of the Gulf Cooperation Council affected by strong opposition between Qatar and other member states.

\*\*\*

## State of Qatar

Wednesday, 13 September—Turkey's presidency announced an imminent trip by Qatar's Emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, to visit Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan in Ankara. Turkey has been a solid Qatari ally since the start of the boycott by the Anti-Terror Quartet even announcing the expansion of its military base in Doha.

Wednesday, 13 September—Moody's new report on the current GCC crisis unveils how Qatar faces large economic, financial and social costs stemming from related travel and trade restrictions. The rating agency in particular, outlined the dangers related to the continued capital outflows from Qatar's banking system.

Thursday, 14 September—Gulf based human rights groups condemned Doha's move to revoke the citizenship of Sheikh Taleb bin Lahom bin Shreim, the head of Qatar's based al-Murrah tribe. Sheikh Taleb recently met Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, accompanied by a number of al-Murrah Sheikhs, and affirmed his support to Riyadh against the policies of the present Qatari leadership.

Thursday, 14 September— Qatari opposition figures, during the 2017 conference they organized in London, discussed with US, UK and Middle Eastern politicians on Qatar's founding and support to terror groups.

\*\*\*

## Sultanate of Oman

Tuesday, 12 September—Oman's Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs, Sayyid Asa'ad bin Tariq Al Said, received in his office Andrew John Cowell, the United Kingdom's Ambassador to the Sultanate. The bilateral meeting focused on ways to increase both trade and military cooperation between Oman and the UK.

Thursday, 14 September—Oman's Rural Areas Electricity Company (RAEC), has signed two agreements for the development of the Dhofar Wind Power Project, the first utility scale wind-based renewable project in the GCC. The wind power project, expected to be completed by end 2019 and connected to the Dhofar grid, represents the first sizable Omani investment in renewable energies.

## United Arab Emirates

Monday, 11 September—The Commander-in-Chief of UAE's Armed Forces, General Hamad Mohammed Thani Al Rumaithi, confirmed the death of an Emirati pilot while he was operating as part of the Arab Coalition's Operation Restoring Hope in Yemen. The UAE are at the forefront of international efforts to restore president's Hadi government after the Iran-backed Houthi militias seized Yemen's capital.

Tuesday, 12 September—The UAE government announced plans for a donation to UNICEF. Such move aims at contributing to the organization's efforts to provide relief to children affected by Hurricane Irma.

Wednesday, 13 September—Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry, announced UAE's travel and tourism sector is expected to rise over the next five years, reaching over \$56 billion in 2022 in showing significant success the country's economic diversification.