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OFFICIAL OPENING

QATAR EMIR OPENS DOHA FORUM, CALLS FOR ACTION ON SYRIA AND ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

- *Qatar Emir says international community must act to stop Syria's "horrifying tragedy"*
- *Emir says Israel should engage with Palestinians to end conflict holding the region back*
- *Emir says Arab populations want their say in political and economic decision-making*

The Emir of Qatar, His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani called on the international community to take action to stop a "horrifying tragedy" in Syria that has entered its third year. Addressing the 13th Doha Forum in its opening session, the Emir said the Syrian government continued to pursue a military solution and ignore the "voice of reason".

"We feel sorrow to see the revolution of the Syrian people enter its third year without a clear horizon to end a bloody conflict that has left tens of thousands of innocent victims and millions of displaced people and refugees, in addition to widespread material destruction, because the regime has held to the military solution," the Emir said. "It is no longer acceptable for influential countries in the international community not to act to put an end to this horrifying tragedy and worsening humanitarian disaster."

The Emir also said Israel should not let the opportunity pass to realise peace with the Palestinians based on two states along the line of Israel's pre-1967 border, adding that there could not be long-term stability and security in the region without a resolution of the decades-old conflict.

"Israel must not lose the opportunity provided by the Arab peace initiative," he said, referring to a 2002 Arab League proposal for peace with Israel in return for the creation of a Palestinian state which Qatar has recently made efforts to revive. "Our region will not know stability and security until a fair solution to the Palestinian issue is found and there is withdrawal from all Arab territories occupied in 1967."

The Emir said that the movement of Arab uprisings that began in 2011 has placed Israel in direct confrontation with Arab populations whose support for the Palestinian cause was previously held in check by governments who alone regulated the conflict with Israel. "The Arab Spring revolutions have set Israel in direct confrontation today with the Arab peoples and not only with rulers," he said.

The Emir also said that democratic reforms in the Arab world must continue since the old arguments used by Arab autocrats that domestic change could only come once the historical Arab-Israeli conflict was resolved - since ongoing conflict necessitated reliance upon security and police apparatus, the argument went - were no longer relevant. "We have heard in the past that reform has to be put aside until a peaceful settlement is reached with Israel, but everyone should realise that such thinking is no longer tenable after the Arab Spring revolutions," he said.

He also said that political participation in public affairs was a key aim of the Arab reform process, but that change meant more than simply casting votes in ballots.

"We must not forget that prevalence of poverty, unemployment, absence of decent means of living and violation of human rights under autocratic, repressive and corrupt regimes were the driving forces of Arab revolutions that continue to aim for popular participation in political and economic decision-making," he said. "This means starting to develop the institutions that can ensure the scale of this participation... thus we ensure the practice of respecting other opinions to achieve social interaction based on dialogue rather than violence... The flourishing of the democratic process is not only casting votes in ballot boxes at specific times."

In a welcoming speech, Qatar's Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr Al Thani also said the Arab Spring had set the region on a path towards representative government and human rights and, reviewing the forum's history, he praised HH the Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani for his determination to start the Doha Forum and turn it into a success.

SENEGALESE PRESIDENT AND TUNISIAN PRIME MINISTER ADDRESS 13th DOHA FORUM

- *African economies are growing and Arabs should invest in them – Senegal President*
- *Sall tells opening session of Doha Forum that world economy is undergoing “profound changes” but investors should know Africa is heading in the right direction*
- *Tunisia's PM says government and new constitution will ensure civic state that respects all*
- *PM Larayedh says Tunisia managing to navigate post-uprising social and economic challenges*

Arab countries should seize the initiative to invest in African countries where economies are growing despite major shifts in the world economy, Senegalese President Macky Sall said in the Qatari capital on Monday. While Tunisian Prime Minister Ali Larayedh said Tunisia was on track to create a new democratic society despite the teething pains of the first years after a rebellion in 2011 that succeeded in ousting former ruler Zain Al-Abidine Ben Ali and set off the Arab Spring uprisings.

At the opening session of the 13th Doha Forum in Qatar, President Sall said, “The world today suffers from economic hardships as we see economies that were flourishing now shaken and we see the emergence of new geopolitical powers in an international economy that is witnessing profound changes between and within states.”

Sall, who won a major electoral battle last year against long-time presidential incumbent Abdoulaye Wade, said Africa was taking heed of the move towards democratic reform and popular participation seen in Arab countries since 2011.

“Africa is not unaffected by these changes. Our countries continue to work on a path of creative dynamism and do not want to be far from the process of spreading democracy and freedom of expression in the world,” he said, addressing the opening session of the forum.

While many regions undergo these political and economic shifts, African growth levels continued to be among the highest in the world, he said.

“African countries have new investment opportunities in major sectors including agriculture, energy and infrastructure. The African Union has earmarked \$68 billion of infrastructure projects in five areas of the continent,” he said, adding: “We would like to invite Arab partners to come and help build the bridge between the Arab world and Africa.”

Sall said African countries were pursuing a development model that had jettisoned old ideas focussed on state-led projects. “We want to go beyond state support for development because that hasn’t worked. We call for the private and public sectors to come together to build roads, railways, electricity plants and other useful projects in African regions,” he said, adding this would be the aim of a roundtable with G20 countries in St Petersburg later this year.

Also addressing the opening session, Tunisian Prime Minister Ali Larayedh gave an outline of progress in Tunisia, the birthplace of the Arab Spring.

“My country is going through a transitional phase and our experience and the success of our experience are extremely important,” he said. “The Tunisian people are trying to build a new humanitarian, civic, democratic, pluralistic country that protects human rights... A civic state that is not religious or military. The individuals who represent the people will be chosen by the people as their legitimate representatives.”

A member of the ruling Islamist Ennahda party, Larayedh was interior minister in Tunisia’s first elected government after the revolution and was appointed as prime minister in March after a reshuffle provoked by clashes between leftist activists and the Islamist-led authorities.

Larayedh acknowledged these tensions saying the government was working to strengthen social peace and labour rights and he cited problems of inflation and regional wealth disparity – protests have often centred on deprived interior and southern regions of the North African state.

Larayedh said Tunisia’s Islamist vision included rights for all and that the ballot box would be the ultimate protection against the return of despotism. “Islam is a source of innovation, creativity and values. Tunisia will remain committed to its religion and openness. But we will not be a theocratic state. Tunisia will not discriminate against non-Muslims,” he said. “We want a democratic state because... elections are the most important tool to limit despotic practices.”

“Tunisia is on the right path despite the challenges. A constitution will be adopted soon that will create a civic state: the constitution has been presented for public discussion and legislative elections will be held by the end of the year,” Larayedh added.

He also said the Islamist-led government was encouraging the private sector to stimulate the economy: “We are trying to strengthen it and encourage projects.”

- Senegal President Sall says African economies are growing despite blows to world economy
- Sall says Arab states should invest in Africa, which has heeded message of Arab Spring
- Tunisia’s Islamist PM says Tunisia is managing post-uprising challenges, vows democratic system

FIRST SESSION – PERSPECTIVES ON REGIONAL PEACE STABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT

DOHA FORUM PARTICIPANTS CALL FOR INTERVENTION IN SYRIA, REGIONAL ACTION TO BOOST MIDEAST ECONOMY

- *Francois Fillon, former French PM: We must stop the Syrian conflict spreading*
- *Gordon Brown, former UK PM: MENA development bank needed to find jobs for Arab youth*
- *Amado Boudou, Argentinian VP: Austerity measures are hurting world's poor, developing nations*
 - *Wolfgang Ischinger, Munich Security Conference: Don't repeat Bosnia mistakes in Syria*

Participants in the first discussion panel of this year's Doha Forum, which started in the Qatari capital on Monday, warned of the consequences of allowing the bloodshed in Syria to continue. They also called for more regional action to boost the Middle East economy and global action to tackle the economic and climate problems of an increasingly interconnected world.

"We should put an end to the catastrophe of the Syrian conflict and stop it spreading beyond its borders," said Francois Fillon, who served as France's prime minister from 2007-12 under the presidency of Nicolas Sarkozy. "It is destabilising the region, weapons are coming from everywhere to Syria (and) Assad wants to export the conflict beyond his borders."

Wolfgang Ischinger, chairman of the Munich Security Conference and Germany's chief negotiator at the Dayton negotiations that tried to stop bloodshed in the Bosnian war in 1995, expressed similar fears.

"If we keep doing what we are doing collectively, we will end up with the worst of the worst: hundreds of thousands dead, a failed state, a destabilised region, loose weapons of mass destruction, extremism. Syria is failing as we speak. Hatred and conflict have already ripped apart Syria's society," he said. "I'm reminded of Bosnia... And this is I want to say: doing nothing because doing something is so difficult also breeds responsibility and guilt. Inactivity is not a strategy. What then? The longer it takes, the worse it gets."

Both said they saw some hope in a conference of all parties to the Syrian conflict – which began in 2011 as Arab populations rose up against entrenched rulers across the region – that the United States and Russia say they hope to organise, perhaps within weeks.

Ischinger also echoed comments made earlier by the Emir of Qatar, His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani in his opening address for more progress on ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He said the European Union had not done enough to push the two parties towards resolving the conflict, and needed to do more than focus its efforts on funding the Palestinian Authority.

"For all the good sense of EU statements on this issue over the years, the EU's inactivity in the face of increasingly dangerous stagnation is both unprincipled and unwise," Ischinger said. "Later generations will see it as unforgivable that we Europeans not only allowed the situation to develop to this point of acute tension, but took no action now to remedy the continuing destruction of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination."

Former UK prime minister, Gordon Brown said he was worried by a lack of global resolve to tackle issues jointly such as climate change and world trade talks, adding that the lack of cooperation at a regional and global level – partly a consequence of the financial downturn worldwide – was hurting everyone.

"World growth is 3 percent when it should be 6 percent, Western economies are not growing," Brown said, while "we are at a unique transition point where for the first time the majority of production is in the East but the majority of consumer spending is still in the West".

"We will see in the next two decades a global middle class which may be one billion people but will be a few billion more people by 2025. We will see urbanisation move from almost 50 percent of the population to 60 then 70 percent of the population, we will see two billion people owning cars and homes in a spread of middle

class prosperity that is unprecedented in history,” Brown said. This will constitute “a major turning point in the global economy... so we need global cooperation to secure growth”.

Turning to the Middle East, Brown said growth was also not at levels it should be but affluent Gulf countries were in a position to change that. “Egypt’s growth is 2.2 percent, Jordan’s is 2.6 percent, Morocco’s 2.4 percent, Tunisia 3.6 percent this year, but growth in all these cases could be 5-10 percent each year,” he said, proposing a Middle East and North Africa development bank along the lines of the Islamic Development Bank and funded by oil states to train youth and find them jobs. “This region has young people, a high number who want to set up businesses, but youth unemployment is high,” said Brown, a vocal opponent of austerity measures taken by the UK government since he left office in 2010.

Vice President Boudou, a former economy minister, said austerity measures were hurting developing countries and global action was needed to find another way out of the financial crisis.

“We need to engineer a new financial system so we can get out of this crisis safely. We need to put an end to austerity policies. When we reduce budgets of entire countries it will have a direct impact on people of the world,” he said, citing Qatar as a good example of a country employing available resources to improve the well-being of its people. “Austerity policies are casting shadows and negative repercussions for the poor in developing countries and effecting employment rates.”

- Doha Forum participants want action to end Syria bloodshed, conflict spreading
- Argentina’s Vice President Boudou says austerity measures hurt developing countries
- Former UK PM Brown proposes Mideast development bank to fight youth unemployment
- Brown says Western countries need to cooperate to meet economic challenges

SECOND SESSION – GLOBAL ECONOMY AND DEVELOPMENT

DOHA FORUM PANELLISTS SAY MIDEAST COUNTRIES SHOULD REMOVE TRADE BARRIERS AND IMPROVE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS TO AVOID SOCIO-ECONOMIC INSTABILITY

Session at the 13th Doha Forum looks at the global economy and its effect on development in the Arab region

Panellists at the 13th Doha Forum in the Qatari capital said on Monday that Arab states needed to do more to remove trade barriers and improve intellectual property rights, which would be key improving economic performance.

“We all recognize that failure to protect intellectual property undermines economic confidence. Investors and foreign companies are looking to invest in the Middle East. They want to protect their rights,” said Hedi Nasheri, sociology professor at Kent State University. She outlined four questions that U.S. firms ask themselves: Do Arab culture and Islamic law recognize IP rights? How does such a recognition manifest itself in practice? Is Islamic protection of property rights clear and sufficient? Are Arab states’ laws consistent with Islamic law?

“When it comes to copying materials in the Middle East I don’t have good news. The Middle East is purchasing copied goods in stunning (amounts) – 90% of CDs sold in Israel are pirated. This is a major problem in many countries in the Middle East,” Nasheri said. “The Islamic treaty for protecting the rights of authors, passed in 1994, is a great document but it must be amended to include current challenges, including computer programs and software. Treaties recognising patent rights across countries should be adopted. The general public needs to be educated about the value of intellectual property rights.”

Other panellists said Arab states would need to realise better growth rates to stave off dangerously high unemployment rates. “Arab economies need near double digit economic growth for the next decade to keep up with the population growth and the youth bulge,” said Frederic Kempe, president of the Atlantic Council think tank. “The Arab population will double by 2050, without economic growth things will not go well.”

Kempe said the United States should work with GCC countries to develop an economic plan to avoid “chronic instability” setting in by 2030 and he suggested Arabs should look to Turkey’s success in creating a modern middle class.

Citing Ireland’s experience, Chairman of Ireland’s Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade Paul Breen said investing in education and a raft of free trade agreements (FTAs) had been key to helping the small European country escape the worst of the financial crisis.

“Foreign direct investment is at an all-time high because we have a good young, well-educated workforce. Education is important as well as development,” he said. “Ireland has also focused on FTAs. Ireland has started negotiations with Asia and Japan for FTAs. There are huge opportunities for trade in the Arab world as well, particularly the new democracies in the region such as Libya and Iraq.”

Ian Lucas, UK Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs, also pointed to increased trade links with the rest of the world as the key to finding jobs. “In the Middle East there is a profound worry that there is an educated and growing group of young people for which there is no work. This is a common problem we need to address,” he said. “There is a huge opportunity for the Arab world to link in with the rest of the world.”

But Lucas returned to the theme of removing trade barriers, which he said would be key allowing young educated Arabs to realise their potential. “The Arab world has a great entrepreneurial spirit. We need to ensure we do not build unnecessary barriers which stop the [young people] from addressing new issues. We need to create structures to enable young people to develop their own businesses,” he said, striking a positive note. “The Middle East is a place where innovation, initiative, and entrepreneurship can flourish. But it needs to remove the barriers that stop people from creating their own businesses.”

Paula J. Dobriansky, a Senior Fellow at Harvard University’s JFK Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, said allowing women to realize their social and economic potential was another critical factor in

helping the region avoid instability in the future. “What is the role of women in the advancement of the global economy and development? Women have an important and vital role,” she said. “In this region you have an unfulfilled advancement because of the need to give more opportunities to women.”

- Panel says region could face instability by 2030 if jobs are not provided for young populations
- Improved intellectual property rights essential to attracting foreign investment
- Panel says governments should focus on education, empowering women, removing trade barriers

THIRD SESSION – THE ARABS AND FUTURE CHALLENGES IN A CHANGING WORLD: A NEW WORLD ORDER

DOHA FORUM PANEL DEBATES DECLINE IN US INFLUENCE IN MIDEAST, SEES MORE STRIFE IN SYRIA AND ISRAEL-PALESTINE

- *Former French foreign minister Vedrine: U.S. is a declining power, but we need it to stay engaged*
- *Pascal Boniface: A multipolar world is forming in which no power can enforce a “Pax Americana”*
- *Former US ambassador LeBaron: U.S.-Gulf “vital relations” could decline in next 20 years*
- *Former UK ambassador Cowper-Coles: Post-WWI Mideast settlement is unravelling, Western powers should help Egypt, Syria and Israel-Palestine steer through difficult times*
- *Russian analyst Sobonina: U.S. failed in Iraq and Afghanistan, should work with Russia and others*

Panellists discussing geopolitical challenges facing the Arab world at the Doha Forum on Monday agreed that U.S. power has entered a period of decline in the Gulf and wider Middle East, but expressed fear for what this could mean for post-Arab Spring Egypt and Syria as well as the future of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

“The United States is no longer the hyperpower... but it is a relative decline in that it is partly because others are rising,” said former French foreign minister Hubert Vedrine at a discussion panel titled “The Arabs and Future Challenges in a Changing World: A New World Order”. “I think we need a United States that stays engaged with the world, we need reasonable engagement not unilateralism. Multilateralism is what we need from the United States... the (new) international system is still being built.”

“Since the end of the Cold War, we have come to realise that the United States does not control the world but rather that the world is highly fractured and there are no international orders able to impose their ‘Pax Americana’,” said Pascal Boniface, director of the Institute for International and Strategic Relations (IRIS) in Paris.

“The Western world has not witnessed the end of its presence, but it has seen the end of its hegemony. The United States and Europe will not become weak... We need to acknowledge a new reality. We can work with BRIC countries because there are opportunities, but we need to change our habits and modus operandi in order to be in the race,” Boniface added, referring to rising economic and political powers; Brazil, Russia, India and China.

Yelena Sobonina of the Russian Institute for Strategic Research said Russia welcomed the multilateral approach that Washington was increasingly taking; saying American power alone had failed to solve major world problems. She cited the U.S. interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan as examples. Washington is set to withdraw forces from Afghanistan next year after a post-9/11 invasion in 2001; it invaded Iraq in 2003 and formally withdrew forces in 2011.

“The Americans have still not managed to win the peace in Afghanistan or Iraq and failed to achieve stability in and around these countries,” Sobonina told the forum. “Russia is in favour of collective action and peaceful actions for resolving conflicts and soft power instead of direct intervention.”

Questioned by an audience member about Russia’s support for the government of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, Sobonina said Russia was opposed to direct intervention in a sovereign state. She noted that Washington was now showing concern about the future of Syria. “Russia said many times it does not support Assad personally but we should not force him to stand down and I don’t think anyone can force him to do that,” she said. “Also the United States is often reserved and now more so towards what happens in Syria and that’s the common point now between America, Russia, France and others.”

Earlier, the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani called on the international community to take action to stop a “horrible tragedy” in Syria that has entered its third year. Addressing the opening session of the Forum, he said the Syrian government continued to pursue a military solution and ignore the “voice of reason”. Qatar has been a major supporter of the Syrian opposition trying to bring down Assad.

Former U.S. ambassador Richard LeBaron, a visiting fellow at the Atlantic Council, said the receding of U.S. influence would place strains on U.S.-Gulf relations over the next two decades as Washington tries to urge its long-time allies towards new political contracts with their peoples. He also broached the subject of the large communities of expatriates in Gulf countries who have made major contributions to the construction and administration of modern Gulf Arab cities.

“There is a clear need for greater dialogue at all levels on the evolution of political models in the Gulf states... in the next 20 years. We need to have confidence as mature partners to have a frank and sincere discussion about politics and political systems,” LeBaron said. “Change is inevitable in any region but it is not unmanageable... Unless our ambitions are vast, our accomplishments will be limited and they may not sustain this vital relationship in the coming years.”

He went on: “We have in the United States the growing phenomenon of working class poor... and those in the vast limbo of undocumented labour. In the Gulf the vast majority who do the bulk of work come from somewhere else... These arrangements are no more sustainable than the broken immigration system in the United States.”

Sherard Cowper-Coles, former ambassador in Israel and Saudi Arabia as well as the UK foreign secretary’s special representative to Afghanistan and Pakistan in 2009-10, put the events of the region in light of the failed U.S. intervention in Iraq and the unfolding events of the Arab Spring into a dramatic context, saying that the region was witnessing no less than the unravelling of the Arab order established by Western powers after the First World War.

He said a failure of Western states to realise this and act upon it would worsen violent conflict, and pointed to the failure of Britain and its successor power in the region the United States to ensure a Palestinian state alongside Israel.

“Great forces of history are unfolding in front of us as we meet in Doha this evening,” Cowper-Coles said. “We are seeing the beginning of the end of America as the great regulating power in the Middle East. After two failed expeditions into the ‘land of the two rivers’ (Iraq) and one into Southwest Asia (Afghanistan/Pakistan), America is withdrawing. Those two wars were sins of commission and still in Palestine we have the sin of omission, the failure to address the mistakes made by Britain and the United States.”

“All of us know what needs to be done for Israel’s sake in Palestine, all of us know what needs to be done for the wretched people of Syria’s sake. All of us know that we need more and not less diplomacy, and America’s engagement above all... All of us know what needs to be done but each of us ask ourselves whether the will is there any longer, particularly in Washington,” the British diplomat said.

- Doha Forum panelists note decline in U.S. influence in region, hope it will engage in multilateral approach
- UK diplomat says the regional order is unraveling, fears for more conflict without U.S. engagement
- Russian analyst says U.S. has shifted towards Russia’s cautious position on Syria conflict