



CBN01 | 2018  
09 | 8

**EGIC**  
Euro-Gulf  
Information  
Centre

# Arab Gulf

C O U N T R Y

B U L L E T I N S

September 03 - 06



The Last Thing to Read this Week

*by*

NIKOLA ZUKALOVA



## Kingdom of Bahrain

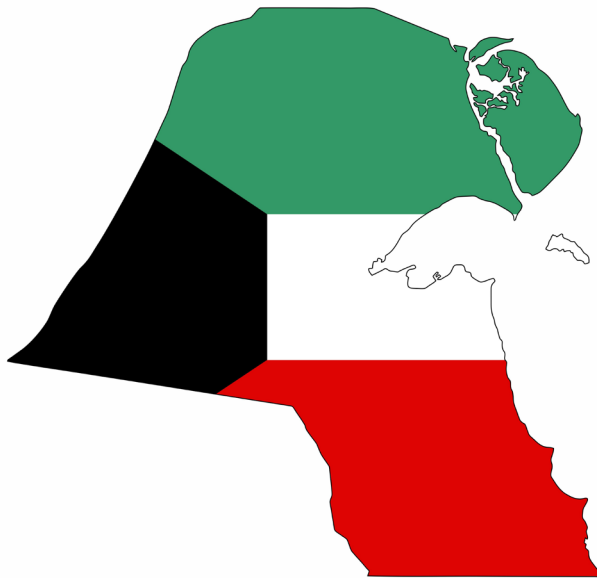


3 September—Bahrain announced its candidacy to the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva for the 2019-2021 term in the elections scheduled for October 2018 in New York. Bahrain has been steadily reforming and has established new domestic human rights institutions, such as the National Institution for Human Rights, the Ombudsman Office and the Prisoners and Detainees Rights Commission.

4 September—Bahrain's Cabinet approved a new regulation allowing foreign companies to set up subsidiaries, which could do business without local partners. In 2016, Bahrain approved 100% business ownership in some sectors, the UAE followed suit in May 2018.



## State of Kuwait



3 September—Kuwait's General Administration of Customs and the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) of the US Department of Energy signed an agreement on cooperation to combat the trafficking of radioactive materials. The US will assist and support the Kuwaiti Administration of Customs in Kuwait International Airport, ports and land borders, notably by supplying equipment capable of detecting radioactive materials.

5 September—The Emir of Kuwait, Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, met with US President, Donald Trump, for the second time in the White House. At the press conference both leaders highlighted their strong relations and appreciated their cooperation, particularly in fight against terrorism and the US President highlighted Kuwaiti investments in the United States. However, President Trump was focusing more on domestic US politics, given the nature of the questions he received from reporters.



## Sultanate of Oman

3 September—Oman's Oil and Gas Minister, Dr Mohammed bin Hamad Al-Rumhi, and Bahraini Minister of Oil, Shaikh Mohammed bin Khalifa Al-Khalifa, opened the 2018 World Heavy Oil Congress and Exhibition, held at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre, as Oman is the first country in the region to invest in the heavy oil sector. Three thousand participants, including experts and specialists from all around the world exchanged ideas and discussed the future of energy.

4 September—Senior officials from Oman and Bahrain met in the Sultanate's Salalah for the Sixth session of the Bahraini-Omani Joint Committee to discuss the strengthening of bilateral cooperation between the two Gulf countries. Memorandums of Understanding in culture and tourism, as well as two Operational Programmes (2018-2021) on environmental protection, and youth and sports were signed. The Bahraini Minister of Foreign Affairs and head of the Bahraini delegation, Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al-Khalifa, arrived on Monday in Salalah, where he was received by his Omani counterpart, Yousef Bin Alawi Bin Abdullah. The Seventh session will be held in Bahrain in 2019.





## State of Qatar



4 September—Doha made the first step towards abolishing the controversial exit visa, which requires migrant workers to obtain employers' permission to leave Qatar. The new law allows employers to make only some of their workers subjects to the permission requirement, the rest are free to leave in accordance with their contract. Qatar has faced allegations of exploitation of migrant workers in connection with massive construction projects for the 2022 World Cup. Expatriates make up some 90% of Qatar's 2.7 million population.

6 September—The Emir of Qatar, Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, and German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, will address the Qatar-Germany Business and Investment Forum, held in Berlin on Friday (7 Sep 2018). Participants will include senior government officials, businessmen and CEOs from both countries. Germany has become an important partner for Doha, with mutual trade amounting to €1.9 billion and Berlin's support for Qatar in the 2017 Gulf Crisis. Doha uses investments as part of its strategy, currently it eyes the German Mittelstand companies and the Emir is expected to announce new large investments at the Forum.



## Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

4 September—Saudi Arabia's Public Prosecutor is seeking capital punishment for controversial Saudi cleric, Salman Al-Awda, imprisoned since last September. Al-Awda belongs to the Sahwa Movement, which has been accused of ties to the Muslim Brotherhood and terrorism finance. In the 1990s he was praised by Osama bin Laden for his opposition to the Saudi government, he later publicly gave up extremism but continued to delegitimise the Kingdom's leadership. Al-Awda's imprisonment comes as Mohammed bin Salman works to sap the power of extremist religious figures.

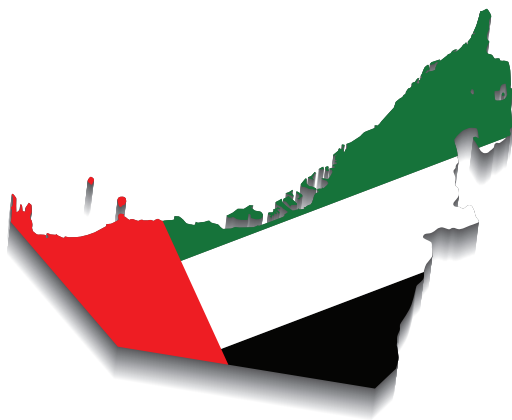
6 September—On Wednesday, the Saudi Royal Air Defence intercepted another ballistic missile fired by the Iran-backed Houthi militias over the city of Najran, 37 people were wounded by shrapnel. The Houthis have intensified their attacks against Saudi Arabia's populated areas this week. On Monday and Tuesday, another three missiles heading towards Jazan were intercepted. So far, the Houthi militias have fired approximately 187 rockets toward Saudi Arabia since 2015.





## United Arab Emirates

3 September—The UAE will send its first two astronauts to the International Space Station. The two are Hazza Al-Mansouri and Sultan Al-Nayadi. They will undergo intensive training before the launch in April 2019. The UAE is the only country in the region to have a Mars probe programme and the Mohammed bin Rashid Space Centre is further developing the country's space programme.



4 September—The Dubai Multi Commodities Centre (DMCC) — designated as a global free zone of the year for 3 years running — will open an office in one of Germany's economic centres—Dusseldorf. Germany is the fourth largest exporter to the Emirates and their mutual trade amounted to \$11 billion in 2017. The move comes as Dubai aims at boosting ties and investments with German businesses—already 900 of them have registered in the zone—and as European countries are keener to develop closer trade relations with Dubai. Free zones are key for attracting international companies to the UAE.

4 September—Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the UAE's Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, visited the United Kingdom, where he met with the UK's Home Secretary, Sajid Javid, to discuss strengthening bilateral ties between the two countries, mainly in security. The Minister also met with a delegation of British investors as both countries seek to enhance their trade relations. In 2017, their mutual trade increased by 12% to \$22.4 billion.



*The Arabian Gulf is rapidly becoming a geopolitical pivot. As a result, it is important to understand the internal and international dynamics unfolding in the region and the countries that compose it. We at EGIC are proud to present “The Last Thing to Read this Week” segment which contains a small, carefully selected, batch of the most important events unfolding in the countries of the Arab Gulf to help you map the region’s trends.*

