

Home > ... > Joint Statement of the Second U.S.-Bahrain Strate...

# Joint Statement of the Second U.S.-Bahrain Strategic Dialogue

MEDIA NOTE

OFFICE OF THE SPOKESPERSON

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The following is the text of a joint statement by the Governments of the United States of America and Bahrain.

*Begin text:*

Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani convened the second U.S.-Bahrain Strategic Dialogue on February 28, which coincided with the visit to Washington by the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, His Royal Highness Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa. Across four working groups, discussions focused on advancing key priorities such as expanding strategic cooperation to support peace and security; deepening professional, educational, and cultural ties; enhancing prosperity by strengthening bilateral economic cooperation; and countering terrorism and transnational threats. The Secretary and the Foreign Minister reflected on 50 years of unwavering and steadfast U.S.-Bahrain relations, and the Secretary congratulated the Foreign Minister on recently concluding a successful year as President of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

The United States expressed appreciation to the Kingdom of Bahrain for hosting the headquarters of the United States Navy's Fifth Fleet and, as a Major Non-NATO Ally, for stepping forward to facilitate the relocation of U.S. citizens and other vulnerable individuals from Afghanistan. Both sides reviewed challenges to security from malign actors in the region, and the importance of building international support for Ukrainian sovereignty in the face of Russia's unjustified attack on that country.

The United States and Bahrain reiterated their shared commitment to deterring and confronting threats to the Kingdom of Bahrain and enhancing regional peace and security. The two countries stand shoulder-to-shoulder in countering Iran's destabilizing influence. They looked forward to making further progress during a bilateral workshop Bahrain will soon host as part of the Proliferation Security Initiative workshop, a global effort that aims to stop trafficking in weapons of mass destruction and related materials. They recognized the urgency of bringing peace to Yemen and securing the free flow of humanitarian aid to the Yemeni people while condemning the destabilizing actions of the Houthis in the region. The two countries discussed how to further expand Bahrain's ties with Israel since the historic signing of the Abraham Accords.

The two sides engaged in constructive dialogue on how best to advance human rights, including freedom of expression, and Bahrain's government shared its plan to advance societal and legal reforms. The United States welcomed the Kingdom of Bahrain's expanded application of the alternative sentencing program. It also recognized continued progress by the Kingdom of Bahrain on labor reforms and its admirable record as a regional leader in combating human trafficking, which was manifested by the fourth consecutive year as Tier 1 in the U.S. annual Trafficking in Persons Report. The United States and the Kingdom of Bahrain also decided to further discuss labor issues related to their 2006 Free Trade Agreement.

The two countries developed plans to implement the October 2021 Manama Statement of Cooperation, their first-ever cultural joint statement focused on cultural preservation, through capacity-building programs and institutional partnerships, and they announced new cultural, educational, professional, and sports exchange programs to expand people-to-people ties. The United States committed to sustain its fruitful professional exchanges with the Mohamed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa Academy for Diplomatic Studies, and it plans to implement a Sports Visitor program for outstanding Bahraini athletes with disabilities. The United States and the Kingdom of Bahrain also discussed an International Visitor Leadership Program specially designed for technology entrepreneurs and ways to build on the progress made in women's empowerment. The two sides also recognized their reinforced cultural cooperation as reflected in the recently signed MOU renewing the partnership between the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy Manama and the Isa Cultural Center regarding the American Corner. The United States welcomes the Kingdom of Bahrain's signing of the Artemis Accords to advance civil space exploration.

The United States and the Kingdom of Bahrain discussed their mutual commitment to tackle the climate crisis under the umbrella of the Paris Agreement and collaborated on pursuing greater progress on climate and clean energy transformation goals, including by promoting accelerated action as called for in the Glasgow Climate Pact and through ambitious nationally determined contributions. Both heralded the February 20 groundbreaking ceremony for the U.S. Trade Zone in the Kingdom of Bahrain as a demonstration of the importance of growing trade and investment ties.

The United States and the Kingdom of Bahrain reviewed recent cooperation in law enforcement and maritime and border security. The United States expressed appreciation for the Kingdom of Bahrain's commitment to countering global threats like transnational organized crime and terrorism, and both sides signed implementing arrangements for memoranda of cooperation on border and cargo security as well as the Global Entry Program. The two sides reviewed the success of the State Department's Counterterrorism Partnerships Fund (CTPF) programming to further enhance Bahraini law enforcement's capabilities to protect critical infrastructure security and resilience, to conduct advanced investigations, and to secure its borders. The United States and the Kingdom of Bahrain decided to cooperate on a regional seminar in March for countries in the Middle East and North Africa to foster their efforts to build capacities in investigating and prosecuting crimes associated with money laundering and terrorism finance.

Both nations decided to hold future sessions of the Strategic Dialogue to pursue shared priorities and further deepen the historic partnership and friendship between the United States and the Kingdom of Bahrain.

*End text.*

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