

Thrilled to have you: UAE welcomes American Jewish advocacy group

The American Jewish Committee (AJC) advocacy group said it has opened an office in the United Arab Emirates, its first in the Arab region, in a move welcomed by the Gulf state's foreign minister to promote dialogue.

The UAE and Bahrain established ties with Israel last year in U.S.-brokered deals called the Abraham Accords, becoming the first Arab states in more than a quarter century to break what had been a long-standing taboo in the region.

"We are thrilled to have you," Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed al-Nahyan told the group's virtual annual global forum on Monday. "Your presence in the UAE is ... part of changing mindsets."

Sheikh Abdullah and his Bahraini counterpart Abdullatif Al-Zayani reiterated that the accords, which Sudan and Morocco have also signed, aimed to help bring lasting peace and prosperity through cooperation in fields such as technology and health.



Image source: Al Arabia

"We have to be tolerant to thrive ... in a challenging neighbourhood," the Emirati minister

said.

He said the global effort to “challenge extremism and radical ideas has not been appropriate”.

The UAE, which distrusts Islamist groups, does not allow political parties and shows little tolerance towards dissent. Local media is tightly controlled.

The regional trade and tourism hub has pressed on with plans to further ties with Israel, though with less fanfare following Israel-Hamas hostilities last month and what Arab states have described as Israeli provocations in Jerusalem.

Sheikh Abdullah said finding a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would require “strategic” thinking on both sides.

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