



*United Nations Alliance Of Civilizations
Fellowship Program 2016*

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*2016 EUNA cohort
Visit to Spain, Morocco, Egypt and Qatar*

November 6th – November 23rd 2016



Federal Foreign Office

The UNAOC Fellowship Program is made possible thanks to a grant from the Federal Foreign Office of Germany

Provisional Agenda

Cordoba, Spain– November 6th to 9th

Hotel: Eurostars Conquistador, Calle Magistral González Francés, 15-17, 14003 Córdoba

Sunday, November 6th:

- 12:10: Arrival in Seville. Transfer to Cordoba
- 20:30: Welcome dinner

Monday, November 7th:

- 9:00: 2016 EUNA and MENA Fellows – Introduction session
- 11:00: Interreligious roundtable at Casa Arabe
- 12:30: Visit of the Mosque of Cordoba
- 15:00: Visit of Casa Sefarad
- 17:00: Visit of the Calahorra Tower
- 20:30: Dinner in the city

Tuesday, November 8th:

- 7:00: Departure to Granada
- 9:00: Visit of Al-Alhambra
- 14:00: Tour of Granada
- 15:30: Return to Cordoba
- 18:00: 2016 EUNA and MENA Fellows – Closing session
- 20:30: Dinner in the city

Wednesday, November 9th:

- 8:00: Departure to Seville airport
- 12:20: Departure to Casablanca (flight TAP Air Portugal TP1105. Connection in Lisbon. Flight Royal Air Maroc AT981)

Rabat, Morocco – November 9th to 13th

Hotel: Terminus Rabat, 384, Rabat

Wednesday, November 9th:

- 17:30: Arrival in Casablanca, transfer to Rabat
- 20:30: 2016 EUNA Fellows – Introduction session

Thursday, November 10th:

- 9:30: Meeting with the Higher Council of Education, Training, and Scientific Research
- 15:00: Visit of the Mohammed V Mausoleum
- 16:30: Meeting with the Hiba Foundation

Friday, November 11th:

- 9:30: Meeting at the Rabita Mohammadia of Ulemas
- 15:00: Meeting at the Mohammed VI institute for the training of Imams
- 16:00: Visit of the Chellah District
- 17:30: Meeting with the Association For the Defense of Children’s Rights
- 20:00: Dinner with members of the Moroccan Civil Society

Saturday, November 12th:

- 10:00: Departure to Casablanca
- 11:30: Visit of the Hassan II Mosque
- 14:30: Meeting with the Moroccan League for the Protection of Children
- 16:30: Visit to the Moroccan Culture and Arts Summit
- 18:30: Departure to Rabat
- 20:30: Dinner with Alumni

Sunday, November 13th:

- 10:30: Departure to Casablanca Airport
- 14:10: Departure to Cairo, flight Egyptair MS848

Cairo, Egypt – November 13th to 18th

Hotel: Ramses Hilton, 1115 Nile Corniche, Cairo, Cairo Governorate 12344

Sunday, November 13th:

- 21:10: Arrival in Cairo

Monday, November 14th:

- 09:00: Meeting at Cairo University
- 11:00: Meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- 14:30: Visit to the Citadel and the Sultan Hassan Mosque
- 16:30: Meeting with the Association for Freedom of Thought and Expression

Tuesday, November 15th:

- 09:00: Meeting at the Ministry of Higher Education
- 11:00: Meeting at the Al Azhar Islamic Institution
- 14:30: Visit to Al Azhar Mosque and Khan Al Khalili
- 16:30: Visit to Al Moez Street

Wednesday, November 16th:

- 09:00: Visit to a Coptic Church
- 11:00: Meeting at the Port Saeed Language School
- 14:30: Meeting at the League of Arab States
- 16:30: Visit to the Egyptian Museum

Thursday, November 17th:

- 09:00: Meeting at the Zewail City of Science and Technology
- 11:00: Visit to the Giza Pyramids and the Sphinx
- 14:30: Meeting at the Egyptian Media Development Program
- 16:30: 2016 EUNA Fellows – Mid-Trip session
- 20:00: Dinner with Alumni

Friday, November 18th:

- 10:00: Departure to Cairo Airport
- 13:40: Departure to Doha, flight Qatar Airways QR1304

Doha, Qatar – November 18th to 23rd

Hotel: Retaj Al-Rayyan

Friday, November 18th:

- 17:45: Arrival in Doha
- 20:00: Dinner at Souk Waqif

Saturday, November 19th:

- 8:00: Reception at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- 9:30: Visit to Education City
- 11:45: Visit to Qatar Science & Technology Park
- 15:30: Visit to Abdullah bin Zaid Al Mahmoud Islamic Cultural Center
- 17:30: Visit to the Qatar Center for Interfaith Dialogue

Sunday, November 20th:

- 8:00: Visit to ASPIRE Sports Academy
- 10:30: Visit to Qatar University
- 15:30: Visit to Al-Dhakira Youth Center
- 18:00: Visit to Qatar Leadership Academy

Monday, November 21st:

- 8:00: Visit to Qatar National Commission for Education, Culture and Science
- 10:30: Visit to the Museum of Islamic Art
- 16:00: Visit to Katara (Cultural Village)
- 19:30: Dinner at the Diplomatic club with Young Leaders from Qatar

Tuesday, November 22nd:

- 10:30: Meeting at Silatech
- 14:30: Meeting with Education Above All
- 18:00 2016 EUNA Fellows – Conclusion session

Wednesday, November 23rd:

- All day: Departure home

Advisory Note

Tight schedule

In Rabat, Cairo and Doha, our hosts have organized our agenda, as well as accommodation and transportation. There might be last minute changes to the program.

Because each stay is relatively short, the pace is going to be quite intense and sometimes demanding. It is important that you always have with you a bottle of water and some snacks in case meetings are lasting longer than expected. Our program might also be affected by traffic, which is hard to assess and usually very dense in big Middle Eastern cities.

Kindly be mindful of the fact that it is difficult to please everyone when travelling with a large group while being on a tight schedule. UNAOC and our hosts have been planning ahead as much as they could to ensure that everyone has a positive experience. However, if you face difficulties or have personal issues, make sure to communicate with the UNAOC Fellowship coordinator, who will try to help you solve the situation while taking into consideration logistical constraints and the group's harmony. Please be respectful of other fellows and help out one another during the trip.

Meeting point

We will establish a meeting point and time for the beginning of each day and before each break. Please make sure you are always aware of where and when we meet so the group can be on time. We want to be courteous to our hosts and show respect for the time they are dedicating to us. If you fail to show up on time, it will be on you to find a way to catch up with the group. Our schedule is very tight and we can't afford to wait for late participants.

Passport and money

Please make a copy of your passport and visas before departure and bring these copies with you on the trip. Have a copy of your passport with you at all time. You will be required to show a form of identification to enter some of the sites we will visit. Please always leave your passport at the hotel.

When shopping, eating or going out, it is recommended that you pay cash rather than by card, and that you carry plenty of change for transactions with taxi drivers and shopkeepers. However try not to carry more than the equivalent of \$80/80€ on you.

Each country has a different currency. Morocco uses Moroccan Dirham (MAD), Egypt uses the Egyptian Pound (LE), and Qatar uses the Qatari Rial (QAR). It is best to change money at the airport or at the hotel upon arrival in each country.

Negotiating prices in small shops or at the market is common. The buyer usually tries to cut the price in half and bargains with the merchant until a price is agreed upon. The same goes for taxi drivers. Please note: unless there is a working meter, do not get into a taxi before agreeing on a fare with the driver. While it is recommended to tip waiters (unless service fees are already included) it is not necessary to tip taxi drivers.

Dress Code

You will be required to wear formal business attire for meetings. You will be introduced as UNAOC Fellows. Our counterparts expect to meet with young professionals.

Footwear

Wear comfortable footwear (no sneakers when formal attire is requested) or have a change of shoes in your bag to walk between meetings. During cultural visits and outdoor activities, you can dress in business casual attire. While travelling wear comfortable clothes and shoes.

Decency

Both men and women are expected to dress decently and modestly when exploring public areas. Avoid showing too much skin and wearing anything above the knee. While women shouldn't be wearing short skirts, it is also frowned upon, and sometimes even considered disrespectful for men to wear shorts in certain areas and religious sites.

Women

In order to avoid unwanted attention, especially when travelling alone, taking taxis or walking in the streets, female participants are advised not to wear clothes that are too revealing. They should cover their shoulders and avoid sleeveless and low-necked tops. They should also carry a light scarf and a long-sleeve top in their bag in case we visit a religious site and they need to cover their head and arms in order to be allowed in.

Local laws and customs

Morocco, Egypt and Qatar are Muslim countries. It is important to respect our hosts' traditions, customs, laws and beliefs at all times, and to act accordingly while visiting religious sites. Be also mindful of people praying in the street or in public spaces. Do not interrupt or pass in front of them.

Greetings

Standing up and shaking hands is the most common way of greetings. However some conservative Muslims do not shake hands with the opposite gender. Do not take it as an offense. When in doubt, wait to see if the person you want to greet extends his/her hand. If they don't, give them a nod and smile.

Liquor

It is an offence to drink liquor or be drunk in public spaces in the countries we will visit. Alcohol is available at licensed hotel restaurants and bars. Don't carry alcohol around with you.

Smoke

It is usually not well regarded for women to smoke cigarettes in public, when walking in the streets or in a taxi. Women are usually more comfortable smoking cigarettes in bars and restaurants. In general it is allowed to smoke in most public spaces and restaurants. Smoking hookah pipe is quite common for both men and women.

Security

Rabat, Cairo and Doha are generally safe. However, tourists are always more vulnerable than locals to small crime, especially at night. If you decide to go explore the city on your own or stay out late, remain vigilant and try to go with someone from the group. Avoid displaying expensive items such as smart phones, tablets, camera and cash. Please tell UNAOC Fellowship coordinator where you are going and how to reach you in case of an emergency.

Free time

During your free time, you are welcome to explore the city or rest. Make sure you know where the group will meet next and when. If you have any questions or need advice, ask UNAOC Fellowship coordinator, the organizers or the front desk at the hotel. Websites like TripAdvisor are also good sources of information for travellers.

Health & Medication

It is not recommended to drink water in any of the countries we will visit. On top of the medication you might need to take at the time of travel, you might want to bring medication to calm minor headaches and sooth upset stomachs, as well as sunscreen, insect repellent and hand sanitizer.

Weather

The average temperature in November in:

- Cordoba is around 17°C/63°F
- Rabat is around 20°C/68°F
- Cairo is around 22°C/72°F
- Doha is around 24°C/76°F

Kindly check weather reports before travelling.

Preparation Material – Visit to MENA Countries

MOROCCO

General Information¹

The Kingdom of Morocco is bordered on the North by the Mediterranean Sea, on the West by the Atlantic Ocean, on the South by the Western Sahara, and on the East by Algeria. Two cities, Ceuta and Melilla, and several small islands off the Mediterranean coast remain part of metropolitan Spain. Morocco claims and administers Western Sahara although sovereignty remains unresolved. Rabat is the capital and Casablanca the most populous city.

Land and people

The population in Morocco in 2014 was estimated to be around 34 million. Most of the country is dominated by the Atlas Mountains. In the south lie the sandy wastes of the Sahara desert. In the north is a fertile coastal plain. The population of Morocco is concentrated in the coastal region and the mountains, where rainfall is most plentiful. There are no important rivers in the country, but dams on several coastal streams are used for irrigation and hydroelectric power. The vast majority of Moroccans are Muslims of Arab-Berber ancestry. There are also small Christian and Jewish minorities. Arabic and Amazigh are official languages, but French is often used in business and government, and spoken by a majority of the population. More than half of all Moroccans live in urban areas.

Economy

Agriculture employs about 40% of Morocco's workforce, which suffers from a 20% unemployment rate. In the rainy sections of the northeast, barley, wheat, and other cereals can be raised without irrigation. On the Atlantic coast, where there are extensive plains, olives, citrus fruits, and wine grapes are grown, largely with water supplied by artesian wells. Livestock are raised and forests yield cork, cabinet wood, and building materials. Part of the maritime population fishes for its livelihood. Agadir, Essaouira, El Jadida, and Larache are among the important fishing harbors.

Casablanca is by far the largest port and an important industrial center. Significant industries include textile and leather goods manufacturing, food processing, and oil refining. In the northern foothills of the Atlas Mountains, there are large mineral deposits; phosphates are the most important, but iron ore, silver, zinc, copper, lead, manganese, barytine, gold, and coal are also found. Marrakech, Meknès, and Fès are the most important

centers in the mineral trade. A few oases in southern Morocco, notably Tafilalt, are all that relieve the desert wastes. Tourism also is important economically.

Morocco's coastal areas and the mineral-producing interior are linked by an expanding road and rail network, and port facilities are being further developed. The main exports are clothing, fish, inorganic chemicals, transistors, minerals, fertilizers petroleum products, fruits, and vegetables. The chief imports are crude petroleum, textiles, telecommunications equipment, wheat, gas, electricity, and plastics. France, Spain, and Italy are the leading trade partners.

Government

A constitutional monarchy, Morocco is governed under the constitution of 1972 as amended. The king, who is the head of state, holds effective power and appoints the prime minister, who is the head of government. The bicameral Parliament consists of the 270-seat Chamber of Counselors, whose members are elected by indirect vote for nine-year terms, and the 325-seat Chamber of Representatives, whose members are elected by popular vote for five-year terms. Administratively, the country is divided into 15 regions.

History

Early History to the Nineteenth Century

Morocco has been the home of the Berbers since the second millennium B.C. In A.D. 46, Morocco was annexed by Rome as part of the province of Mauritania until the Vandals overran this portion of the declining empire in the 5th century. The Arabs invaded circa 685, bringing Islam. The Berbers joined them in invading Spain in 711, but then they revolted against the Arabs, resenting their secondary status. In 1086, Berbers took control of large areas of Moorish Spain until they were expelled in the 13th century. The land was rarely unified and was usually ruled by small tribal states. Conflicts between Berbers and Arabs were chronic. Portugal and Spain began invading Morocco, which helped to unify the land in defense. In 1660, Morocco came under the control of the Alawite dynasty. It is a shریف dynasty—descended from the prophet Muhammad—and rules Morocco to this day.

French and Spanish Colonization

During the 17th and 18th centuries, Morocco was one of the Barbary States, the headquarters of pirates who pillaged Mediterranean traders. European powers showed interest in colonizing the country beginning in 1840, and there were frequent clashes with the French and Spanish. Finally, in 1904, France and Spain concluded a secret agreement that divided Morocco into zones of French and Spanish influence, with France controlling almost all of Morocco and Spain controlling the small southwest portion, which became known as Spanish Sahara. Morocco grew into an even greater object of European rivalry by the turn of the century, almost leading to a European war in 1905 when Germany attempted to gain

a foothold in the mineral-rich country. By the terms of the Algeciras Conference in 1906, the sultan of Morocco maintained control of his lands and France's privileges were curtailed. The conference was an indication of what was to come in World War I, with Germany and Austria-Hungary lining up on one side of the territorial dispute, and France, Britain, and the United States on the other.

Independence and Sovereignty of Morocco

In 1912, the sultan of Morocco, Moulay Abd al-Hafid, permitted French protectorate status. Nationalism grew during World War II. Sultan Muhammed V was deposed by the French in 1953 and replaced by his uncle, but nationalist agitation forced his return in 1955. In 1956, France and Spain recognized the independence and sovereignty of Morocco. At his death on Feb. 26, 1961, Muhammed V's son succeeded him as King Hassan II. In the 1990s, King Hassan promulgated "Hassanian democracy," which allowed for significant political freedom while at the same time retaining ultimate power for the monarch. In Aug. 1999, King Hassan II died after 38 years on the throne and his son, Prince Sidi Muhammed, was crowned King Muhammed VI. Since then, Muhammed VI has pledged to make the political system more open, allow freedom of expression, and support economic reform. He has also advocated more rights for women, a position opposed by Islamic fundamentalists. The entrenched political elite and the military have also been leery of some reform proposals. With about 20% of the population living in dire poverty, economic expansion is a primary goal.

Arab Spring Protests Reach Morocco

Early in 2011, tens of thousands of pro-democracy protesters gathered in various cities, calling for a shift to a constitutional monarchy in what was termed the February 20th movement. King Mohammed VI answered with promises of reform, which took the shape of a constitutional referendum in July. February 20th supporters called for a boycott of the referendum, calling the included reforms inadequate and taking offense at its intent to bolster the king's position as "supreme arbiter" of political and institutional life.

¹ Sources: *The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia, 6th ed. Columbia University Press. . 2012*

EGYPT

General Information²

The Arab Republic of Egypt is bordered by the Mediterranean Sea on the North, by Israel and the Red Sea on the East, by Sudan in the South, and by Libya in the West. Egypt's capital and largest city is Cairo. In addition to the capital, major cities include Alexandria, Port Said, Suez, Tanta, and Aswan.

Land and people

Egypt is located in Africa except for the Sinai peninsula, which is situated in Asia and separated from the rest of the country by the Suez Canal. The land North of Cairo is called Lower Egypt and South of Cairo, Upper Egypt. The principal physiographic feature of the country is the Nile River, which flows from South to North through the eastern part of the country. In the far South is Lake Nasser, a vast artificial lake impounded by the Aswan High Dam, and in the North, below Cairo, is the great Nile delta. Bordering the Nile between Aswan and Cairo are narrow strips of cultivated land. West of the Nile is the extremely arid Libyan Desert, a region covered with sand dunes or barren rocky plains. The desert contains a few oases, notably Siwah. East of the Nile is the Arabian Desert, a mostly barren area and virtually uninhabited except for a few settlements along the Red Sea coast. The Sinai Peninsula is a plateau broken by deep valleys; Mount Saint Catherine and Mount Sinai, are located in the South. Northern Sinai, largely a sandy desert, contains most of the peninsula's small population, which lives mainly in towns built around wells.

The population in Egypt in 2014 has been estimated around 87 million. The vast majority lives in the Nile valley and delta, and the rest of the country (about 96% of Egypt's total land area) is sparsely populated. Most Egyptians are being descended from the ancient Egyptians, Berbers, sub-Saharan Africans, Arabs, Greeks, and Turks. Arabic is the official language; many educated Egyptians also speak English and French. About 90% of the people are Sunni Muslims, and most of the rest are Coptic Christians.

Economy

Economic growth in Egypt has been held back by a severely limited amount of arable land (less than 5% of the total area) as well as a large and rapidly growing population. The state owns much of the economy and plays a decisive role in its planning; however, in recent years Egypt has moved toward a more decentralized, market-oriented economy, and there has been an increase in foreign investment.

The country's farmland is intensively cultivated and yields-per-acre are extremely high. Control of the Nile waters by the Aswan High Dam brought considerable additional land

into cultivation, but the needs of the growing population have prevented the accumulation of significant agricultural surpluses. Most farms in Egypt are small and labor-intensive. Nonetheless, about a third of Egypt's workers are employed in farming.

Petroleum and natural gas (found mainly in the Gulf of Suez) are produced. Cairo and Alexandria are the main industrial centers. The leading manufactures are refined petroleum, textiles, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, hydrocarbons, construction materials, and metals. Food processing and tourism are also important industries, and navigation transit fees from the Suez Canal are another important source of foreign exchange. The principal exports are crude and refined petroleum, cotton, textiles, metal products, and chemicals. Leading imports include machinery and equipment, foodstuffs, chemicals, wood products, fuels, and consumer goods. The chief trade partners are the United States, Italy, Germany, France, and Saudi Arabia.

History

Islamic Egypt

The Arab conquest of Egypt (639–42), only some 20 years after the rise of Islam, made the country an integral part of the Muslim world. Until the 19th century, Egyptian history was intimately involved with the general political development of Islam. Eventually, the settling of colonists from Arabia and the increased conversion of peoples to Islam reduced the Christian population to a small minority. The Greek and Coptic languages went out of use, and Arabic became the predominant language. In 969, the Fatimids founded Cairo as their capital, and in 972 they established the Mosque and University of Al-Azhar, which allowed Egypt to become one of the centers of the Muslim world. In 1517, Egypt was conquered by the Ottoman Turks. Napoleon Bonaparte undertook the French occupation of Egypt in 1798 with the objective to cut off British trade lines and, eventually, to detach India from the British Empire. All his efforts were bent to establishing French power in the region. The Ottoman Turks, however, ultimately joined the British in forcing out the French in 1801. The French withdrawal was followed by the rise of Muhammad Ali, who laid the foundations of the modern Egyptian state. He also undertook massive economic development by expanding and modernizing agriculture and by starting large-scale industry. Under his rule the empire eventually extended from Sudan in the South to Arabia in the East and Syria in the Northeast.

European Domination

In 1854, Ferdinand de Lesseps was granted a concession for the construction of the Suez Canal. The strategic nature of the canal, which opened in 1867, shifted Great Britain's focus in the Middle East from Constantinople to Cairo and opened the door to British intervention in Egyptian affairs. The British consolidated their control between 1883 and 1907 when consul general Lord Cromer became the de facto ruler. By 1904 the governments of France, Austria, and Italy agreed not to obstruct Britain in its intention to

stay in Egypt indefinitely. During World War I, Great Britain declared Egypt a British protectorate but Egyptian nationalists of the Wafd party, led by Zaghlul Pasha, became vigorous in their demands for freedom.

Independence

A treaty providing for Egypt's independence was concluded in 1922 and the new constitution made Egypt a kingdom and established a parliament. However, the British protectorate was maintained until the promulgation of a new treaty in 1936, which made the two countries allies and promised the eventual withdrawal of British troops. Egypt's internal political life largely became polarized by the struggle for power between the throne and the Wafd party, which acquired a majority in 1950 and formed a one-party cabinet. The struggle between King Farouk and the Wafdist government intensified, and several political uprisings led to violence. On July 23, 1952, the military, headed by General Muhammad Naguib, took power by coup. In 1953 the monarchy was abolished and a republic was declared. Naguib assumed the presidency, but, in his attempts to move toward a parliamentary republic, he met with opposition from other members of the Revolutionary Command Committee. Increasing difficulties led to the extension of martial law. Colonel Gamal Abdal Nasser emerged as a rival to Naguib, and in February 1954, Naguib resigned.

Egypt under Nasser

Nasser took full power in November 1954 and was elected president for a six-year term. Tension increased in July 1956, when, after the United States and Great Britain withdrew their pledges of financial aid for the building of the Aswan High Dam, the Soviet Union stepped in to finance the dam. Nasser then nationalized the Suez Canal and expelled British oil and embassy officials from Egypt. Egypt embarked on a program of industrialization, chiefly through Soviet technical and economic aid. Both industry and agriculture were almost completely nationalized by 1962. In the spring of 1967, Egyptian troops were ordered to positions on the Israeli border, and Nasser demanded that the UN peacekeeping force stationed on the Egyptian side of the border since 1956 be withdrawn. On June 5, Israel launched air and ground attacks against Arab positions and after six days achieved a rapid and decisive victory. When the UN cease-fire went into effect, Israel held the Sinai Peninsula, Gaza, and the east bank of the Suez Canal. After Nasser's sudden death in September 1970, Vice President Anwar al-Sadat succeeded him as president. Sadat continued to demand Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories and threatened to renew the war in order to regain the lands. In 1972, Sadat ousted all Soviet military personnel stationed in Egypt.

The 1973 War and Peace Settlement

Another war with Israel broke out on October 6 1973, when Egyptian forces attacked Israel

and progressed into the Sinai. Fighting broke out between Israel and Syria on the Golan Heights. The fighting escalated both on the ground and in the air. After Israel had stabilized the Syrian front, its troops crossed the Suez Canal and toward the end of the war were in control of some of the west bank. Sadat called for a cease-fire coupled with the withdrawal of Israel from territories it had occupied since 1967. On October 22 the United States and the USSR submitted a joint resolution to the UN Security Council calling for an immediate cease-fire and the beginning of peace negotiations. On November 9, Israel accepted to withdraw its troops. A result of the settlement was the resumption of diplomatic relations between the United States and Egypt, which had been severed since the 1967 war. This marked the beginning of closer relations with the West. In 1977, Sadat surprised the world with his visit to Jerusalem and plans for peace with Israel. On March 26, 1979, Egypt signed a formal peace treaty with Israel in Washington, D.C. A boycott by Arab countries was imposed on Egypt.

Internal Unrest

Domestic unrest between Muslims and Christians in 1981 led to a crackdown by the government. Tensions heightened, and Sadat was assassinated on October 6, 1981, by Muslim extremists. He was succeeded by Vice President Hosni Mubarak, who faced growing economic problems as well as continued opposition from militant Muslim fundamentalists. A state of emergency, imposed after Sadat's murder, was ultimately extended by Egypt's parliament throughout Mubarak's presidency, finally lapsing in mid-2012. President Mubarak continued amicable relations with Israel and the United States and remained active in the Middle East peace process.

Opposition from Islamic fundamentalists heightened during the 1990s; from 1992 to 1997, more than 1,200 people, mostly Egyptian Christians, were killed in terrorist violence. A 1997 attack on tourists visiting the Temple of Hatshepsut at Luxor claimed some 70 lives. During the same period, an estimated 26,000 Islamic militants were jailed and dozens were sentenced to death.

Poverty is the nation's most pressing problem, but the government has failed to undertake significant economic reforms; social inequities have heightened societal tensions, and authoritarian rule has fostered corruption. Islamic militancy and terrorism also remain challenges to Egypt's government.

In early 2011, young Egyptians, inspired by the revolution in Tunisia, mounted massive nonviolent anti-Mubarak demonstrations. Over 18 days the protesters won the support of major opposition figures and groups while surviving a number of government moves against them, including violence that killed more than 800 people and injured several thousand. The army largely remained on the sidelines and, in the face of growing protests, finally forced Mubarak to resign.

Slow progress toward reforms and concerns about the military government, led at times in

the second half of 2011 to significant new protests. In August, the elections for the lower house of parliament resulted in a significant victory for the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice party (FJP), which won the largest bloc of seats; the hardline Islamist party Al Nour placed second. In March, the assembly to write a new constitution was elected by parliament; it also was dominated by Islamists.

Mohamed Morsi, the Muslim Brotherhood candidate, was elected president after a runoff in late June, 2012. In August a new government, consisting mainly of Islamists and technocrats, was appointed by Morsi. In November a new presidential decree gave Morsi essentially unchecked power, sparking demonstrations against him by liberals and others who saw him as a new dictator and clashes between them and Morsi's supporters. The first months of 2013 were marked by an escalation of violent protests. Massive demonstrations against Morsi in late June and early July, and clashes between Morsi opponents and supporters, led to a military ultimatum calling for the government and opposition to resolve the crisis; subsequently the president was ousted by the military. The military appointed an interim government, General Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi, the armed forces chief and defense minister, also became deputy prime minister.

Muslim Brotherhood supporters protested Morsi's overthrow, leading to recurring clashes with security forces; in August, hundreds died and several thousand were injured when two pro-Morsi protest camps were stormed. Muslim Brotherhood leaders were arrested and charged with inciting violence; the organization was later banned. Islamist militant attacks on security forces and on Coptic churches also increased in the aftermath of Morsi's ouster. In May 2014, General Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi was elected president.

² *Sources: The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia, 6th ed. Columbia University Press. . 2012*

QATAR

General Information³

The State of Qatar is an independent emirate located in Eastern Arabia, coextensive with the Qatar peninsula, which projects into the Arabian Gulf. The capital and largest city is Doha.

Land and People

Qatar is largely barren, flat desert. Water is scarce, and agriculture is minimal. Once a nomadic society, Qatar now has little rural population. Doha, the main urban center, is on the eastern coast of the peninsula. The population in Qatar in 2014 has been estimated around 2.2 million. About 40% of the inhabitants are Sunni Arabs of the Wahhabi sect of Islam. There are Christian and other minorities. Other ethnicities include South Asians, Iranians, and Palestinians. Less than one fifth of the population are native Qataris; most of the workers associated with the important oil and gas industries are foreigners. Arabic is the official language, although English is widely used.

Economy

Qatar imports the majority of its food. Agriculture is limited to fruits, vegetables, and livestock, and there is some fishing. Oil and natural gas, the mainstays of the economy, account for roughly 85% of the country's export earnings. Although total oil reserves are somewhat modest in comparison to other Persian Gulf countries, Qatar is one of the largest natural-gas producers in the world. The vast North Field gas reserve, an underwater field northeast of the Qatar peninsula, began production in the 1990s. Natural gas, crude oil, refined petroleum, and petrochemicals are produced, and ammonia, fertilizers, and steel are some of Qatar's developing diversified industries. The country has also become a regional banking center. Native Qataris have one of the highest per capita incomes in the world. In addition to oil and gas products, steel and fertilizer are exported, while machinery, transportation equipment, food, and chemicals are imported. Japan, South Korea, France, and the United States are the major trading partners.

Government

Qatar is a traditional monarchy headed by the emir, who is the head of state. The government is headed by the prime minister, who is appointed by the emir. A new constitution came into force in 2005, providing for a 45-seat consultative council, two thirds of whose members would be elected and one third appointed by the emir, but it has not yet been established. Members of the 35-seat advisory council (Shura) are appointed by

the ruling family and have had their terms extended since 2005. Administratively, the country is divided into ten municipalities.

History

The area occupied by Qatar has been settled since the Stone Age. After the rise of Islam in the 7th century A.D. it became part of the Arab caliphate, and later of the Ottoman Empire. In the late 18th century it became subject to Wahhabis from the region of present-day Saudi Arabia; they were later supplanted by the Al Thani dynasty. During the Turkish occupation from 1871 to 1913, senior members of the Al Thani family were named deputy governors; subsequently, Qatar became a British protectorate, with Abdullah bin Jassim al-Thani recognized as emir. In 1971, Qatar became independent of Great Britain. In 1972 the reigning emir, Ahmad ibn Ali al-Thani, was deposed by his cousin Khalifa ibn Hamad al-Thani. He in turn was deposed in June, 1995, by his son and heir, Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, who as crown prince was credited with having launched a major industrial modernization program.

In 1981, Qatar joined neighboring countries in the formation of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to strengthen economic relations among the participating nations. The country's stability was threatened by the Iran-Iraq War throughout the 1980s. During the Gulf War in 1991, international coalition forces were deployed on Qatari soil. After the Gulf War, Iraq was still regarded as a threat to Qatar's oil interests; Qatar signed a defense pact with the United States but also restored relations with Iraq.

Adopting a moderate course of action, Emir Hamad in the late 1990s eased press censorship and sought improved relations with Iran and Israel; his government worked to mediate a number of international conflicts. He also moved steadily to democratize the nation's government and institute elections. In 2003 voters approved a constitution establishing a largely elected advisory council with the power to pass laws, subject to the emir's approval; women have the right to vote and hold office. The constitution was endorsed by the emir in 2004 and came into force in 2005. During the Arab Spring Qatar was supportive of uprisings in Libya, Egypt, and Syria, and was seen as politically allied with Muslim Brotherhood groups in number of Arab nations. Sheikh Hamad abdicated as emir in 2013 and was succeeded by his son Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani.

³ *Sources: The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia, 6th ed. Columbia University Press. . 2012*

Islam at a glance⁴

Islam, which means 'submission to the will of God', was revealed over 1400 years ago in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, and is now the second largest religion in the world with over 1 billion followers. Muslims believe that there is only One God, whom they call Allah in Arabic.

In Islam, Jesus, Moses and Abraham are respected prophets and Muhammad is considered to the final messenger sent by God to mankind.

There are five basic Pillars of Islam: the declaration of faith, praying five times a day, giving money to charity, fasting and a pilgrimage to Mecca.

Allah

Muslims believe that Allah is eternal, omniscient, and omnipotent; that Allah knows everything and can do anything that can be done. Allah has no shape or form. Allah can't be seen nor heard. Allah is neither male nor female. Allah rewards and punishes fairly but is also merciful. Allah is one alone with no children, no parents, and no partners. Allah was not created by a being. There are no equal, superior, or lesser Gods. A believer can approach Allah by praying, and by reciting the Qur'an.

The Qur'an

The Qur'an is the holy book for Muslims, revealed by God in Arabic to the Prophet Muhammad in stages over 23 years. Qur'anic revelations are regarded by Muslims as the sacred word of God, intended to correct any errors in previous holy books such as the Old and New Testaments. Some Qur'anic fragments have been dated as far back as the eighth, and possibly even the seventh, century. The oldest existing copy of the full text is from the ninth century. Although early variants of the Qur'an are known to have existed, Muslims believe that the text we have today was established shortly after the death of the Prophet by the Caliph Uthman.

There are 114 chapters, or Surahs, in the Qur'an, which is written in the old Arabic dialect. Each chapter, except one, begins with the sentence *Bismillah Arrahman arraheem* 'In the name of Allah the most merciful and the most kind'. This is the thought with which Muslims should start every action. The longest chapter of the Qur'an is Surah Baqarah (The Cow) with 286 verses and the shortest is Surah Al-Kawther (Abundance) with 3 verses. The arrangement of Surahs does not correspond to the chronological order in which they

were revealed. The Qur'an is sometimes divided into 30 roughly equal parts. These divisions make it easier for Muslims to read the Qur'an during the course of a month and many will read one chapter each day, particularly during the month of Ramadan.

Translations of the Qur'an exist in over 40 languages but Muslims are still taught to learn and recite it in Arabic, even if this is not their native language and they cannot converse in it. Translations are regarded by Muslims as new versions of the holy book, rather than as translations in the conventional sense. At the time of the revelation of the Qur'an, books were not readily available and so it was common for people to learn it by heart. Committing the Qur'an to memory acted as a great aid for its preservation and any person who is able to accomplish this is known as a Hafez. The Qur'an is treated with immense respect by Muslims because it is the sacred word of God. While the Qur'an is recited aloud, Muslims should behave with reverence and refrain from speaking, eating or drinking, or making distracting noise.

The Five Pillars of Islam

The most important Muslim practices are the Five Pillars of Islam, which are the five obligations that every Muslim must satisfy in order to live a good and responsible life according to Islam.

The Five Pillars consist of:

- *Shahadah*, sincerely reciting the Muslim profession of faith
- *Salat*, performing ritual prayers in the proper way five times each day
- *Zakat*, paying charity tax to benefit the poor and the needy
- *Sawm*, fasting during the month of Ramadan
- *Hajj*, pilgrimage to Mecca

The Prophet Muhammad

Muslims believe that Islam is a faith that has always existed and that it was gradually revealed to humanity by a number of prophets, but the final and complete revelation of the faith was made through the Prophet Muhammad in the 7th century CE. Muhammad was born in Mecca in Saudi Arabia in 570. He was a deeply spiritual man, and often spent time in meditation on Mount Hira. The traditional story of the Qur'an tells how one night in 610 he was meditating in a cave on the mountain when he was visited by the angel Gabriel who ordered him to recite. Once Gabriel mentioned the name of Allah, Muhammad began to recite the words of God. During the rest of his life Muhammad continued to receive these

revelations. The words were remembered and recorded, and form the text of the Holy Qu'ran, the Muslim scripture. Believing that God had chosen him as his messenger Muhammad began to preach what God had revealed to him.

The simple and clear-cut message of Islam, that there is no God but Allah, and that life should be lived in complete submission to the will of Allah, was attractive to many people, and they flocked to hear it. Muhammad's popularity was seen as threatening by the people in power in Mecca, and Muhammad took his followers on a journey from Mecca to Medina in 622. This journey is called the *Hijrah* (migration) and the event was seen as so important for Islam that 622 is the year in which the Islamic calendar begins.

Within ten years Muhammad had gained so many followers that he was able to return and conquer Mecca. From this time on he was generally accepted by the faithful as the true final Prophet of God. Muhammad continued to lead his community both spiritually and in earthly matters until his death in 632.

Sunnah and Hadith

In addition to the Qur'an, the other sacred sources are the Sunnah, the practise and examples of the Prophet Muhammad's life, and the Hadith, reports of what the prophet Muhammad said or approved. Both the Hadith and Sunnah must adhere to a strict chain of narration that ensures its authenticity, taking into account factors such as the character of people in the chain and continuity in narration. Reports that fail to meet such criteria will be disregarded.

Mosque

Muslims worship in a building called a mosque. An alternative word for mosque, from the original Arabic, is masjid, meaning place of prostration. Outside every mosque, or just inside the entrance, is a place where worshippers can remove and leave their shoes. There is also a place where they can carry out the ritual washing required before prayer. The main hall of a mosque is a bare room largely devoid of furniture. There are no pictures or statues. Muslims believe these are blasphemous, since there can be no image of Allah, who is wholly spirit.

Everyone sits on the floor and everywhere in the mosque is equal in status. A niche in one of the walls, called a *Mihrab*, shows the direction that the worshippers should face in order

to face Mecca. The muezzin calls Muslims to prayer at the five ritual times of the day. Women can attend the mosque and when they do they sit separately from the men. This is out of modesty and to prevent any distraction. It is more usual for women to pray at home.

Sunni and Shi'a

The division between Sunnis and Shi'as is the largest and oldest in the history of Islam. They both agree on the fundamentals of Islam and share the same Holy Book, but there are differences mostly derived from their different historical experiences, political and social developments, as well as ethnic composition. When the Prophet Muhammad died, he left a community of about one hundred thousand Muslims organized as an Islamic state on the Arabian Peninsula. It was the question of who should succeed the Prophet and lead the fledgling Islamic state that created the divide. The larger group of Muslims chose Abu Bakr, a close Companion of the Prophet, as the Caliph (politico-social leader) and he was accepted as such by much of the community which saw the succession in political and not spiritual terms. However another smaller group, which also included some of the senior Companions, believed that the Prophet's son-in-law and cousin, Ali, should be Caliph. They understood that the Prophet had appointed him as the sole interpreter of his legacy, in both political and spiritual terms. In the end Abu Bakr was appointed First Caliph.

Both Shi'as and Sunnis have good evidence to support their understanding of the succession. Sunnis argue that the Prophet chose Abu Bakr to lead the congregational prayers as he lay on his deathbed, thus suggesting that the Prophet was naming Abu Bakr as the next leader. The Shi'as' evidence is that Muhammad stood up in front of his Companions on the way back from his last Hajj, and proclaimed Ali the spiritual guide and master of all believers. Shi'a reports say he took Ali's hand and said that anyone who followed Muhammad should follow Ali. Muslims who believe that Abu Bakr should have been the Prophet's successor have come to be known as Sunni Muslims. Those who believe Ali should have been the Prophet's successor are now known as Shi'a Muslims. It was only later that these terms came into use. Sunni means 'one who follows the Sunnah' (what the Prophet said, did, agreed to or condemned). Shi'a is a contraction of the phrase 'Shiat Ali', meaning 'partisans of Ali'. The use of the word "successor" should not be confused to mean that those leaders that came after the Prophet Muhammad were also prophets - both Shi'a and Sunni agree that Muhammad was the final prophet.

Ali did not initially pledge allegiance to Abu Bakr. A few months later, and according to both Sunni and Shi'a belief, Ali changed his mind and accepted Abu Bakr, in order to safeguard the cohesion of the new Islamic State. The Second Caliph, Umar ibn al-Khattab,

was appointed by Abu Bakr on his death, followed by the third Caliph, Uthman ibn 'Affan, who was chosen from six candidates nominated by Umar. Ali was eventually chosen as the fourth Caliph following the murder of Uthman. He moved the capital of the Islamic state from Medina to Kufa in Iraq. However, his Caliphate was opposed by Aisha, the favored wife of the Prophet and daughter of Abu Bakr, who accused Ali of being lax in bringing Uthman's killers to justice. In 656 CE this dispute led to the Battle of the Camel in Basra in Southern Iraq, where Aisha was defeated. Aisha later apologized to Ali but the clash had already created a divide in the community.

Islam's dominion had already spread to Syria by the time of Ali's caliphate. The governor of Damascus, Mu'awiya, angry with Ali for not bringing the killers of his kinsman Uthman to justice, challenged Ali for the caliphate. The famous Battle of Siffin in 657 demonstrates the religious fervor of the time when Mu'awiya's soldiers flagged the ends of their spears with verses from the Qur'an. Ali and his supporters felt morally unable to fight their Muslim brothers and the Battle of Siffin proved indecisive. Ali and Mu'awiya agreed to settle the dispute with outside arbitrators. Shortly after the death of Ali, Mu'awiya, assumed the Caliphate of the Islamic state, moving the capital from Kufa to Damascus. Unlike his predecessors who maintained a high level of egalitarianism in the Islamic state, Mu'awiya's Caliphate was monarchical. This set the tone for the fledgling Umayyad dynasty (c.670-750 CE) and in 680 on the death of Mu'awiya, the Caliphate succeeded to his son Yazid.

About the same time, Hussein, Ali's youngest son from his marriage to Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet Muhammad, and the third Shi'a Imam, was invited by the people of Kufa in Iraq to become their leader. Hussein set off for Kufa from his home in Medina with his followers and family, but was met by Yazid's forces in Karbala before reaching his destination. Despite being hopelessly outnumbered, Hussein and his small number of companions refused to pay allegiance to Yazid and were killed in the ensuing battle. Hussein is said to have fought heroically and to have sacrificed his life for the survival of Shi'a Islam. The Battle of Karbala is one of the most significant events in Shi'a history, from which Shi'a Islam draws its strong theme of martyrdom. It is central to Shi'a identity even today and is commemorated every year on the Day of Ashura. Millions of pilgrims visit the Imam Hussein mosque and shrine in Karbala and many Shi'a communities participate in symbolic acts of self-flagellation.

Initially the difference between Sunni and Shi'a was merely a question of who should lead the Muslim community. As time went on, however, the Shi'a began to show a preference for particular Hadith and Sunnah literature, which, ultimately led to different understandings of the laws and practices of Islam. The concept of the Mahdi is a central tenet of Shi'a theology. However many Sunni Muslims also believe in the coming of a

Mahdi, or rightly guided one, at the end of time to spread justice and peace. He will also be called Muhammad and be a descendant of the Prophet in the line of his daughter Fatima (Ali's wife). The Wahabi movement within Sunni Islam views the Shi'a practice of visiting and venerating shrines to the Imams of the Prophet's Family and other saints and scholars as heretical. However most mainstream Sunni Muslims have no objections. All Muslims are required to pray five times a day, but Shi'a practice permits combining some prayers into three daily prayer times.

Today there are significant differences in the structures and organization of religious leadership in the Sunni and the Shi'a communities. There is a hierarchy to the Shi'a clergy and political and religious authority is vested in the most learned who emerge as spiritual leaders. There is no such hierarchy of the clergy in Sunni Islam. The majority of Sunni and Shi'a Muslims do not allow their theological differences to divide them or cause hostility between them. For example, Al-Azhar University in Cairo, the oldest institution of Islamic learning in the world, considers Shi'a Islam to be of equal status to the four Sunni schools of jurisprudence. However, current global political conditions mean there has been a degree of polarization and hostility in many Muslim societies. The term Rafidi (meaning "Rejecter") has been applied by radical Sunnis to disparage Shi'as. In turn the Shi'as will often use the label Wahabi, which refers to a particular sectarian movement within Sunni Islam, as a term of abuse for all those who disagree with Shi'a beliefs and practices.

⁴ Sources: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/>