



National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce الغرفة التجارية العربية الأمريكية الوطنية

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U.S. - ARAB CHAMBER HOSTS IFTAR DINNER IN HONOR OF THE ARAB LEAGUE & ARAB EMBASSIES IN WASHINGTON, DC

*High-Level, Respectful Event at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel
Attracts Over 200 Diplomats and Business Leaders*

Washington, DC - The National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce (NUSACC) hosted this evening an *Iftar* dinner for Arab diplomats, U.S. Government officials, and representatives of the Washington DC business community. More than 200 leaders of multiple faiths attended the event, a high-profile gathering held at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Washington DC.

“One doesn’t need to be a Muslim to appreciate *Ramadan* and its traditions of reflection, purification, and godliness,” said David Hamod, President & CEO of the National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce. “These attributes are mirrored in the traditions of many religions around the world, accentuating what we celebrate in common: our humility, our humanity, and the spirit that draws us together.”



Imam Mohamed Bashar Arafat speaks about the significance of Ramadan for the Muslim world.

Breaking the fast (*Iftar*) during *Ramadan* is a traditional event celebrated daily by more than a billion Muslims around the globe. *Ramadan* is a holy month of spiritual cleansing in which adherents of Islam rededicate themselves to God, worship, and reading the Quran, Islam’s



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Ambassadors and sponsors pose for a photo in the Ritz-Carlton Ramadan tent.

holiest book. The month-long period is marked by fasting, personal sacrifice, self discipline, and increased generosity, especially toward those who are less privileged.

Hamod noted that the U.S.-Arab Chamber has served as a bridge between cultures for more than 40 years and that the *Iftar* dinner represents a unique way of bridging gaps between the United States and the Arab world. He said, “*Ramadan’s* commitment to adhering to a straight path – in a business context – translates into good ethics,

corporate social responsibility, volunteerism, and respecting the rights of others, including minority shareholders.”

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This is the second year that NUSACC has co-hosted an *Iftar* dinner in Washington DC. Dozens of diplomats attended the event, including a number of Arab ambassadors.

His Excellency Mohamed Al-Rumaihi, Ambassador of the State of Qatar to the United States, noted, “I greatly enjoyed the *Iftar* and the opportunity to meet with so many members of the Washington DC business community from all different faiths.” He concluded, “I would like to thank the National U.S. - Arab Chamber of Commerce for organizing this important gathering.”

Her Excellency Houda Nonoo, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the United States, put it this way: “The *Iftar* provided an excellent opportunity to introduce members of the U.S. business community to a very meaningful tradition in Bahrain, the Arab world, and across the Muslim world. The National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce serves as an important commercial and cultural bridge between the



H.E. Mohamed Al-Rumaihi, Qatar's Ambassador to the U.S. (left), is joined by Shireen Said, Oman's Commercial Attaché and David Hamod, President and CEO, NUSACC.



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United States and that part of the world, and on behalf of the Kingdom of Bahrain, I was very pleased to participate in this special event.”



Iftar dinner guests were entertained by live music and the beautiful art of the Guarisco Gallery, located adjacent to the Ritz Carlton Hotel in Washington, D.C.

The night’s guest speaker was Imam Mohamad Bashar Arafat, who reflected on the importance of sharing *Ramadan* with different communities and tailoring the *Ramadan* experience to diverse cultures around the world. He shared insightful (and sometimes humorous) stories about bringing the traditions of *Ramadan* to America, which is estimated to include as many as ten million Muslims in its population. During this time of spiritual cleansing, Imam Arafat said, “Muslims are encouraged to fully read and understand the Holy Quran” and to learn important lessons that can be applied in all areas of daily life.

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The breaking of the fast began during an exclusive VIP reception held at Guarisco Gallery, a fine arts establishment located adjacent to the Ritz-Carlton. The elegant gallery features an inventory of important 19th and early 20th-century American and European paintings and sculptures, providing a stately backdrop for the reception.

The Ritz-Carlton, the evening’s Lead Sponsor, rolled out the red carpet for its high-level guests, providing a lovely yet respectful setting for the hotel’s numerous offerings. In addition to gourmet fare, the Ritz included stunning flower arrangements and a special *Ramadan* tent featuring dates and Arabic coffee.

“The Ritz-Carlton was honored to co-host an *Iftar* dinner with the National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce in observance of the Holy Month of *Ramadan*. This dinner has become a tradition that I hope will continue in the years ahead,” said Elizabeth Mullins, Vice President and Area General Manager of the Ritz-Carlton Hotels of Washington, DC. “Ritz-



Bahrain's Ambassador to the U.S., H.E. Houda Nonoo (right) is greeted by (left to right): David Hamod, President & CEO of NUSACC; Mr. Jay Salkini, CEO of Tecore Networks; and Khalil Zaided, Deputy Mayor of Baltimore City.



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Carlton enjoys a strong partnership with NUSACC throughout the year, with many events and meetings. But as we reflect during this spiritual and sacred time, we are reminded of the bonds of our friendship and the strength of our partnership that is fortified with each occasion that we share together.”

The seven other sponsors of the *Iftar* event included Advanced Technology Systems Company, Bin Dawood, Danube, Etihad Airways, Qatar Airways, Raytheon, and Tecore Networks.

The evening’s Master of Ceremonies, Amin Salam, NUSACC’s Vice President for Business Development, concluded, “We are delighted to include the Arab diplomatic corps, representatives of the U.S. Government, NUSACC member companies, and so many honored guests for this year’s *Iftar* dinner. This meaningful and respectful event – in which we share cultures, break the fast together, understand one another, and reflect on improving our lives and the lives of others – is one that we look forward to building together with you in the years ahead.”



Master of Ceremonies, Amin Salam, NUSACC Vice President of Business Development, welcomes the Iftar dinner guests to NUSACC's second annual Iftar dinner at the Ritz Carlton Hotel.

The National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce, widely regarded as the voice of American business in the Arab world, is in touch with business communities across the United States and serves as the U.S. point of contact for the national chambers of commerce in the 22 Arab nations. On a daily basis, NUSACC works closely with leaders throughout the Arab world, as well as high-level decision makers in the U.S. business community, public policy research centers, multilateral institutions, nongovernmental organizations, media, and the U.S. Government.