



NATIONAL U.S.-ARAB CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

غرفة التجارة الأمريكية العربية الوطنية

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## U.S. – ARAB CHAMBER HOSTS SEVENTH ANNUAL IFTAR DINNER IN WASHINGTON, DC

*“The Most Elegant Iftar in America” Draws  
Record Number of Diplomats, Business Leaders, and Sponsors*

*“We Need to Lift Each Other Up. That is the Spirit of Ramadan, and  
That is What the World Expects of Us.” – Imam Yahya Hendi*

**Washington D.C.** – This past week, the National U.S. – Arab Chamber of Commerce (NUSACC) hosted its seventh annual Ramadan *Iftar* celebration in honor of the Arab diplomatic community and the League of Arab States. The event – held at The Ritz-Carlton Hotel in downtown Washington DC – drew a record number of diplomats, business executives, and sponsors. More than 150 leaders of numerous faiths attended the high-profile gathering, widely regarded as the most elegant *Iftar* in America. **To see a three-minute video of this event, please click [here](#).**

Three dozen Arab diplomats from 16 nations attended the dinner. This included eight Arab Ambassadors, representing Bahrain, Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, Oman, Sudan, Tunisia, and Yemen. Lead Sponsors of the event included the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar Airways. In addition, there were eight Gold Sponsors, the largest number ever.



Senior Arab Embassy officials, U.S. Government representatives, and *Iftar* sponsors from around the United States attended NUSACC’s seventh annual Ramadan *Iftar* celebration.

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Breaking the fast (*Iftar*) during Ramadan is a traditional event celebrated daily by the estimated 1.8 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 holiest book. The month-long period is marked by fasting, personal sacrifice, self discipline, and increased generosity, especially toward the underprivileged.



David Hamod, President and CEO of NUSACC.

“In the spirit of Ramadan, let us count our blessings,” said David Hamod, President & CEO of NUSACC, at the *Iftar* dinner. “Let us celebrate what is good in the world, but also how we may strive to make the world a better place.”

### **NUSACC *Iftar*: Attracting Leaders from All Walks of Life**

Thousands of *Iftar* dinners are held in the United States during Ramadan every year, but the NUSACC *Iftar* is unique for its elegance and its high-level participants – including diplomats – from all religions and walks of life.

“Gatherings such as the NUSACC *Iftar* help to build bridges between the U.S. and the Arab world, and they promote tolerance and a more peaceful coexistence,” noted H.E. Yousef Al Otaiba, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Ambassador to the United States. “Ramadan is a spiritual time to reflect on the things that bring communities and cultures together.” [The UAE Embassy](#) was a Lead Sponsor of this year’s NUSACC *Iftar*.

The second Lead Sponsor was the [Ritz-Carlton Hotel](#) Company, the Luxury Brand Leader of Marriott International, now the largest hotel chain in the world. The Ritz-Carlton, Washington DC, has partnered with NUSACC for the past seven years in support of the annual *Iftar*. In recent years, this partnership has grown to include three more Washington DC-area Ritz-Carltons: Georgetown, Tysons Corner, and Pentagon City.



The third Lead Sponsor was [Qatar Airways](#), the exclusive airline partner of this year's Iftar. Qatar Airways was named "Airline of the Year" at the Skytrax World Airline Awards in 2017 and, more recently, Qatar Airways was recognized for the "World's Best Business Class" by TripAdvisor Travelers' Choice Awards.



Over 30 Arab diplomats attended this year's dinner, including Arab Ambassadors representing Bahrain, Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, Oman, Sudan, Tunisia, and Yemen.

Gold Sponsors at this year's *Iftar* included [Amazon Web Services](#), [Atlas Luxury Jets](#), [Black and Veatch](#), [Chevron](#), [General Atomics](#), [Global Docs](#), [Lockheed Martin](#), and [Raytheon](#). Without the generous support of these sponsors, the NUSACC *Iftar* would not have been possible.

### Honoring the Diplomats

This annual tradition provides NUSACC with an opportunity to honor Arab embassies, particularly the Ambassadors, as well as the League of Arab States, which formally recognizes NUSACC as a business gateway between the United States and the 22 countries of the Arab world. Over 30 Arab diplomats attended this year's dinner, including eight Arab Ambassadors:



H.E. Yasser Reda (right), Egypt's Ambassador to the United States, visits with Ambassador Thomas Kelly of Raytheon.

- Kingdom of Bahrain – H.E. Sheikh Abdulla Bin Rashid Al Khalifa
- Arab Republic of Egypt – H.E. Yasser Reda
- State of Libya – H.E. Wafa Bughaighis
- Islamic Republic of Mauritania – H.E. Mouhamedoun Daddah
- Sultanate of Oman – H.E. Hunaina Al-Mughairy
- Republic of Sudan – H.E. Maowia Khalid
- Republic of Tunisia – H.E. Fayçal Gouia
- Republic of Yemen – H.E. Dr. Ahmed Awad Bin Mubarak



“Our Chamber is proud to partner with the Arab Embassies and Consulates across the United States,” said David Hamod, NUSACC’s President & CEO. “We support these diplomats on a daily basis and, without their support and encouragement, NUSACC could not do its job effectively.”

### Remarks of the Imam

After dinner, [Imam Yahya Hendi](#) offered remarks on Ramadan, the deep significance of fasting, and the importance of mutual understanding.

“Islam practices values that are embodied in the month of Ramadan,” he said. “Love is the essence of faith, forgiveness is the essence of religiosity, and humility is the essence of humanity.”



Rabih Mogharbel, Vice President of Business Development, NUSACC.



David Hamod, NUSACC President & CEO, welcomes (from left to right): Amb. Ahmed Mubarak of Yemen, Amb. Faycal Gouia of Tunisia, Amb. Wafa Bughaighis of Libya, and Amb. Maowia Khalid of Sudan.

He went on say, “Fasting teaches us how to win our wars against selfishness, egotism, destructive desires, and routines . . . [to battle] against laziness, anxiety, and hopelessness. Ramadan makes me believe in myself! Isn’t this what the Arab world needs? We need young men and women who believe in themselves . . . who believe that there can be a better way: Of harmony, of peace, of justice, and of co-existence.”

“The most important lesson of fasting,” Imam Hendi suggested, is that “all religions are united in the very essence of their rituals and spirituality . . . . We need to lift each other up and look after each other. That is the spirit of Ramadan, and that is what the world expects of us, what God wants.”

In his concluding remarks, he noted, “The value of togetherness can be seen in Ramadan: We need to walk with each other and by each other – Jews, Christians, and Muslims; secularists and atheists; men and women; East and West. The value of togetherness can best be seen in the month of Ramadan. You see it here tonight, and I thank the National U.S. - Arab Chamber of Commerce for making this possible.”



Imam Yahya Hendi



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*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.*

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