

Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia Event Summary

*Indiana Council on World Affairs Distinguished Speaker Series
Her Royal Highness Ambassador Reema Bandar Al Saud*

Hosted by the Indiana Council on World Affairs

June 18, 2020
Zoom Interactive Event
7:00-8:00 p.m. EDT

Her Royal Highness Ambassador Reema Bandar Al Saud addressed a virtual event, hosted by the Indiana Council on World Affairs (ICWA) on Thursday, June 18, 2020. After being introduced by Larry Cimino, president of the ICWA, Ambassador Reema focused her remarks on several areas surrounding the robust 75-year U.S.-Saudi partnership. She then participated in a question and answer session with the over 155 virtual attendees.

Ambassador Reema spoke passionately on the relationship and ties between the people of the Kingdom and Indiana, highlighting shared values of the two. She further applauded the mission of the ICWA for bringing cultures and international perspectives from around the world to the Hoosier State. The topics discussed were among the most pressing current issues for the international community including the world's response to COVID-19, regional stability in the Middle East and Saudi Arabia's relationship with Iran, and the conflict in Yemen. Ambassador Reema addressed Saudi Arabia's perspectives and described the steps that have recently been taken by the Kingdom to further peace and stability throughout the Middle East and globally.

Ambassador Reema further discussed the bold and inspiring transformation occurring in Saudi Arabia under Vision 2030. From diversifying the Saudi economy to opening Saudi Arabia to tourism, Vision 2030 touches every government department and Saudi citizen. Vision 2030 also seeks to empower women, an effort recently recognized by the World Bank Group whose yearly Women, Business, and the Law report recognized Saudi Arabia as having made the biggest yearly improvement. Specifically, the report recognized Saudi Arabia for barring sexual harassment in both the public and private employment sectors, legally protecting pregnant employees from discriminatory dismissal, setting the retirement age the same for men as for women, and mandating equal pay for women as their male counterparts. Ambassador Reema spoke extensively on these changes and provided real world examples as to how significant these changes are for women in the Kingdom.

Additional topics covered by Ambassador Reema included:

- Saudi Arabia's educational programs and academic institutions advancements and cutting-edge research.
- The business climate for start-ups and entrepreneurs in the Kingdom and how Vision 2030 has made the process more efficient.
- The Kingdom's recent justice system reforms and how they benefit women across the Kingdom.
- Lessons for college students and aspiring diplomats considering a career in international relations.
- The importance of the Midwest and America's heartland in the continued vibrant partnership between the U.S. and Saudi Arabia.

The event concluded with Ambassador Reema thanking the panelists and encouraging all attendees to visit the Kingdom once COVID-19 allows safe international travel.

*These materials are distributed by LS2group on behalf of the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia.
Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.*