

Local

Top US officials attend Kuwait Embassy's annual gala dinner

Celebrating enduring friendship, strong partnership between US, Kuwait



WASHINGTON: Secretary of State Mike Pompeo with Kuwait's Ambassador to the US Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah and his wife. —KUNA



Senior Advisor to the President Jared Kushner, Advisor to the President Ivanka Trump with Kuwait's Ambassador to the US Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah and his wife.

WASHINGTON: US Vice President Mike Pence and top US administration officials gathered at the Kuwait Embassy in Washington for an evening honoring Second Lady Karen Pence, the recipient of the Humanitarian Award for her commitment in raising awareness about the mental health profession of art therapy in the US and around the world. The Gala Dinner for UNHCR, hosted by Kuwait's Ambassador to the US Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah and his wife Sheikh Rima Al-Sabah honoring Karen Pence, is an event that celebrates the enduring and important friendship and strong partnership between the US and Kuwait that goes back to many decades. In his speech, Kuwait's Ambassador to the US, Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah shed light on Kuwait's commitment "to supporting refugees and advocating for peace, stability and dignity for all people," saying "it is a commitment that is part of our national culture."

"Our leader, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, is a bridge-builder who has sought to create a broad, multilateral response to the humanitarian crises stemming from conflicts in the region and beyond," he noted. He added that "Our leader, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, is a bridge-builder who has sought to create a broad, multilateral response to the humanitarian crises stemming from conflicts in the region and beyond."

"His Highness the Amir was recognized in 2014 by the United Nations for his exemplary humanitarian leadership," he remarked. "His Highness the Amir is passionate about Kuwait's role in addressing a range of humanitarian causes, and believes deeply that the world must always be able to count on the generosity of the Kuwaiti people."

Sheikh Salem stressed that "in that spirit, let us continue this noble work, let us strengthen the bonds of friendship through shared action. Because the destiny of all humanity is rooted in friendship, in peace, in security and in service."

Meanwhile, the Ambassador's wife, Sheikh Rima Al-Sabah, indicated that "this year alone we have raised over \$1 million for UNHCR programs that support refugee and displaced women and children" saying "together, we are changing lives."

She shed light on the refugee challenge the world is currently witnessing, saying "68 million men, women and children around the world have been driven from their homes by violence, war and persecution," where over half of those "are displaced children."

"Every day, another 44,000 people become refugees. This is a terrible humanitarian crisis. And it's only growing," she stressed. She noted, "and yet there is hope. Every day, men and women with the UN Refugee Agency are working to keep these refugees safe, help them find homes and medical care, place them in jobs and in schools and whenever possible, return them to their homes."

Relentless advocacy

Introducing Second Lady Karen Pence, the 2018 Kuwait-America Foundation Humanitarian Award recipient, Rima Al-Sabah shed light on her "relentless" advocacy for the healing power of art therapy. She noted that last year, Karen Pence launched "Healing with the Heart," an initiative "to elevate the standing of art therapy as a powerful, positive treatment for various conditions, illnesses and struggles."

In a speech as she accepted her award, the Second Lady Karen Pence expressed her honor to receive the Award, saying she is "very grateful for the recognition." She added that it is "such a privilege to be able to shine a spotlight on the issues that are close to my heart." "Thank you for allowing me to have a platform to share" what the honor and work of the Second Lady is about, she remarked.

In the meantime, Vice President Mike Pence thanked Ambassador and his wife "for their hospitality,"

expressing his honor "to be a part of such a worthy cause." He delivered the greetings of President Donald Trump and gratitude "for last year's honor and tonight's honor and wanted all you to know that he so appreciates the generosity and spirit represented through the event."

Furthermore, he praised Kuwait for being "one of the largest donors to the UNHCR from the Middle East and North Africa providing billions in humanitarian aid to its neighbors to help shelter refugees," expressed appreciation and gratefulness on behalf of the US administration. He also took the opportunity to announce that the US has provided nearly \$1.6 billion to the UNHCR over the past year and noted that this is the largest contribution from the US in history, an "unprecedented level of support in a single year," he noted.

'Good work of Kuwait'

Furthermore, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said in his remarks "on behalf of the US, we thank the

good work of Kuwait" for its assistance and the enormous humanitarian work and the efforts it has done for the refugees around the world. He thanked His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the Kuwait leadership "for being such great citizens of the world," and praised Kuwait's noble and vital support, "that I know it will continue."

He shed light on the time he was a private citizen and in his previous posts, member of Congress and CIA Director, saying he watched the neighborhood in the region closely and "watched Kuwait be a good citizen" for its neighboring states, giving generously to the people of Iraq and during the Syria crisis. He indicated that Kuwait has donated billions of dollars to Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt "to help them host millions of refugees," saying "without this assistance they would be in even worse conditions." Pompeo stressed the importance of the event and the work that is being done for refugees and encouraged others to join in this important cause as well.

'Global leadership'

UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres expressed in his remarks appreciation for the "solidarity and generosity" of His Highness the Amir, the Kuwaiti government and people of Kuwait. He noted that it was His Highness the Amir that was the first to respond and assumed a "global leadership" during moments of the Syria crisis to respond to the "dramatic suffering" of the refugees' flow. He also praised Sheikh Salem and Rima Al-Sabah for bringing people together "for a noble cause of the world."

The gala dinner was attended by Pompeo, Guterres, Secretary of Labor Alex Acosta, Secretary of Homeland Security Kristjen Nielsen, Senior Advisor to the President Jared Kushner, Advisor to the President Ivanka Trump, Executive Director of The Trump Organization Donald Trump Jr., Counselor to the President Kellyanne Conway, Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats and Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Christine Lagarde. —KUNA



Second Lady Karen Pence honored

Kuwait, US discuss fight against money laundering

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Minister of Finance Nayef Al-Hajraf and visiting US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin addressed the fight against money laundering and terrorism. During the meeting, held on Thursday evening, they also discussed the need to work together as part of international efforts to realize the goals of both countries, the Kuwaiti Ministry of Finance said in a press release on Friday. The meeting targeted the promotion of bilateral relations and cooperation between Kuwait and the US to serve the common interests of both sides, according to the release. It also highlighted Kuwait's efforts in the fight against terrorism and its finance, given that this Gulf country had played host to two previous meetings on counter-terror efforts, it added.

The Kuwaiti minister was quot-



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Minister of Finance Nayef Al-Hajraf meets with the visiting US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin. —KUNA

ed as saying that Kuwait always works with the international community to carry out international resolutions bearing on the fight against terrorism. Kuwait also looks forward to coordinating with all friendly countries to exert concerted efforts to fight the scourge

of terrorism, according to the release. The meeting was attended by Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) Governor Mohammad Al-Hashel, Managing Director of the Kuwait Investment Authority Farouk Bastaki and several other Kuwaiti officials. —KUNA

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