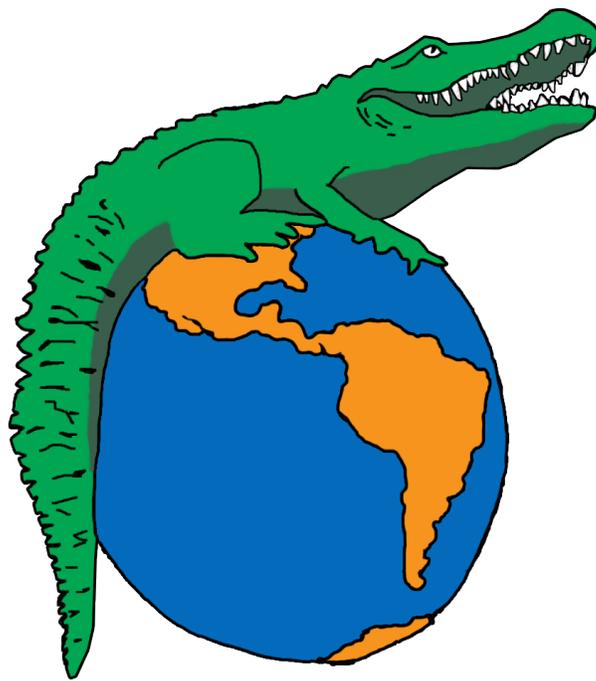


# GatorMUN XVI

## Background Guide



The Saudi Arabian  
Council of Ministers

Distinguished Delegates,

Welcome to GatorMUN XVI! I am delighted to serve as your director for the Council of Ministers of Saudi Arabia Committee. My name is Victoria (Tori) Asgard and I am a third-year economics and political science double major, with minors in business administration and mass communications, at the University of Florida. I have been involved in Model United Nations since I was a freshman in high school and joined the University of Florida's Model United Nations during my first year in college. I have staffed six conferences, serving as an assistant director for four, a crisis staffer for one, and directing the European Parliament at last year's GatorMUN. In addition, I attended six conferences in the past two years.

My interest in Middle Eastern politics stems from my upbringing and background. Although I was born in the United States, I lived in the Middle East for 8 years of my life (7 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates and 1 in Ankara, Turkey) giving me an interesting perspective and knowledge on many of the topics you will be discussing. My father was also a Foreign Service Officer for the American State Department, and focused on relations between the United States and the Middle East, further fostering my interest in the subject.

In order to adequately prepare for this committee, you must understand the history of Saudi Arabia, how the council came to be, and how it has evolved over time. As this is a specialized committee, it is essential to read the background guide. It will be incredibly helpful as a starting point for your research and it will explain the unique features that this committee will have. Knowing the current issues that Saudi Arabia faces, both international and domestic, and the role that your minister plays in those issues, is also crucial to the success of the committee.

To ensure that you are fully prepared for committee, **delegates are required to submit a position paper (1 page suggested, 2 pages maximum) about their minister's stance on the topic at hand.** This committee will only have one "topic," but will face many crises along the way, so make sure to do additional research beyond what it is in the background guide in order to best address them. Delegates will be cooperating to create handwritten directives, so notepads will be a necessity. **Computers will not be allowed without explicit permission.**

I am so excited to work with all of you and hope that everyone comes prepared so we can have an interesting, thought-provoking, enjoyable and exciting debate! If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact me at [gatormun@gmail.com](mailto:gatormun@gmail.com). Good luck in your research, and I cannot wait to meet all of you incredible delegates (or ministers) in committee!

Best Regards,

Victoria Asgard  
Director

# Rules of Procedure

## Quorum

A majority of voting members answering to the roll at each session shall constitute a quorum for that session. This means that half plus one of all voting members are present. Quorum will be assumed consistent unless questioned through a Point of Order. Delegates may request to be noted as “Present” or “Present and Voting.”

## Motion to Open Debate

This opens the floor for debate, allowing other points or motions.

## Motion to Set the Agenda

This motion determines the order in which the topics of a committee will be debated. Permission to speak will be accorded to one speaker for and one speaker against, and a two-thirds majority is required for the motion to pass.

## Motion to Open the Speaker’s List

Opening the Speaker’s List requires a simple majority to pass. A delegate may only be present on the Speaker’s List once, but may re-enter after he/she has spoken. If the Speaker’s List expires, debate then closes.

## Motion to Set Speaking Time

Speaking Time must be indicated by this motion from the floor before any members of the body may speak on the Speaker’s List. This motion must also accompany any motion for a Moderated Caucus. In a Motion to Set Speaking Time for the formal Speaker’s List, a delegate may also specify a number of questions or comments to automatically affix to the Speaking Time. These designated questions or comments may also have Speaking Time or Response Time (in the case of a question) limits, but these are not required. The Director may rule any Motion to Set Speaking Time dilatory. This motion requires a simple majority. Any delegate may make this motion between formal speakers in an effort to change the Speaking Time.

## Motion to Close the Speaker’s List

The Speaker’s List may be closed upon a motion from the floor. Permission to speak will be accorded to one speaker for and one speaker against, and a two-thirds majority is required for the motion to pass.

## Motion to Suspend the Rules for the Purpose of a Moderated Caucus

This motion must include three specifications:

- a. Length of the Caucus
- b. Speaking time, and
- c. Reason for the Caucus.

During a moderated caucus, delegates will be called on to speak by the Committee Director. Delegates will raise their placards to be recognized. Delegates must maintain the same degree of decorum throughout a Moderated Caucus as in formal debate. This motion requires a simple majority to pass.

## Motion to Suspend the Rules for the Purpose of an Unmoderated Caucus

This motion must include the length of the Caucus. During an unmoderated caucus, delegates may get up from their seats and talk amongst themselves. This motion requires a simple majority to pass. The length of an unmoderated caucus should never exceed twenty minutes.

## Motion to Suspend the Meeting

This motion is in order if there is a scheduled break in debate to be observed. (ie. Lunch!) This motion requires a simple majority vote. The Committee Director may refuse to entertain this motion at their discretion.

## Motion to Adjourn the Meeting

This motion is in order at the end of the last committee session. It signifies the closing of the committee until next year's conference.

## Motion to Table the Topic

If a delegate believes that the flow of debate has become stagnant, he/she may make this motion. To Table the Topic is to halt debate on the present Topic, save the speakers' list and all draft resolutions, and move on to the next Topic on the Agenda. The delegate making this motion may also choose to specify a previously tabled Topic. This motion requires a two-thirds vote to pass. The Topic may be returned to at any time by tabling the present Topic and adding the phrase "for the purpose of returning to Tabled Topic \_\_\_\_," to this motion. If no Topics have been previously tabled, debate must follow the established Agenda. This motion is to be used sparingly.

## Points of Order

Points of Order will only be recognized for the following items:

- a) To recognize errors in voting, tabulation, or procedure,
- b) To question relevance of debate to the current Topic or
- c) To question a quorum.

A Point of Order may interrupt a speaker if necessary and it is to be used sparingly.

## Points of Inquiry

When there is no discussion on the floor, a delegate may direct a question to the Committee Director. Any question directed to another delegate may only be asked immediately after the delegate has finished speaking on a substantive matter. A delegate that declines to respond to a question after a formal speech forfeits any further questioning time. The question must conform to the following format:

Delegate from Country A raises placard to be recognized by the Committee Director.

Committee Director: "To what point do you rise?"

Country A: "Point of Inquiry."

Committee Director: "State your Point."

Country A: "Will the delegate from Country B (who must have just concluded a substantive speech) yield to a question?"

Committee Director: "Will the Delegate Yield?"

Country B: "I will" or "I will not" (if not, return to the next business item)

Country A asks their question (it must not be a rhetorical question.)

Country B may choose to respond or to decline.

If the Delegate from Country B does not yield to or chooses not to answer a question from Country A, then he/she yields all remaining questioning time to the Committee Director.

## Points of Personal Privilege

Points of personal privilege are used to request information or clarification and conduct all other business of the body except Motions or Points specifically mentioned in the Rules of Procedure.

Please note: The Director may refuse to recognize Points of Order, Points of Inquiry or Points of Personal Privilege if the Committee Director believes the decorum and restraint inherent in the exercise has been violated, or if the point is deemed dilatory in nature.

## Rights of Reply

At the Committee Director's discretion, any member nation or observer may be granted a Right of Reply to answer serious insults directed at the dignity of the delegate present. The Director has the ABSOLUTE AUTHORITY to accept or reject Rights of Reply, and the decision IS NOT SUBJECT TO APPEAL. Delegates who feel they are being treated unfairly may take their complaint to any member of the Secretariat.

## Working Papers and Draft Resolutions

Once a Working Paper has been submitted, approved, distributed, and formally introduced to the body, it can and will be referred to as a "Draft Resolution." In order for a Working Paper to be submitted to the Committee Director, it must be in correct format and bear the names of a combination of a number of Sponsors and Signatories necessary to introduce, as determined by the Committee Director.

Sponsors are the writers of the Working Paper, and agree with it in its entirety. They should be able to vote 'yes' for the paper during voting procedure. Signatories are those delegates interested in bringing the Working Paper to the floor for debate, but do not necessarily agree with its contents.

A delegate can motion to discuss the working paper during a moderated caucus or unmoderated caucus. A delegate can also motion for an author's panel, which is essentially a moderated caucus moderated by the authors. It is the chair's discretion on the maximum amount of authors allowed on the author's panel.

## Friendly Amendments

Friendly Amendments are any changes to a formally introduced Directive that *all* Sponsors agree to in writing. The Committee Director must approve the Friendly Amendment and confirm each Sponsor's agreement both verbally and in writing.

## Unfriendly Amendments

Unfriendly Amendments are any substantive changes to a formally introduced Directive that are not agreed to by all of the Sponsors of the Directive. In order to introduce an Unfriendly Amendment, the Unfriendly Amendment must have the number equivalent to 1/3 of Quorum confirmed signatories. The Committee Director has the authority to discern between substantive and nonsubstantive Unfriendly amendment proposals.

## Plagiarism

GatorMUN maintains a zero-tolerance policy in regards to plagiarism. Delegates found to have used the ideas of others without properly citing those individuals, organizations, or documents will have their credentials revoked for the duration of the GatorMUN conference. This is a very serious offense.

## Motion to Close Debate and Voting Procedures

A motion to close debate may only pass with a two-thirds majority. Once this motion passes, and the committee enters Voting Procedure, no occupants of the committee room may exit the Committee Room, and no individual may enter the Committee Room from the outside. A member of the Dias will secure all doors. No talking, passing notes, or communicating of any kind will be tolerated during voting procedures.

Once moving into voting procedures chair can only accept these motions:

- A point of order to correct an error in procedure
- An appeal of the decision of the chair
- A motion for division
- A motion for roll call vote
- A motion for adoption by acclamation

Each Draft Resolution will be read to the body and voted upon in the order which they were introduced. Any Proposed Unfriendly Amendments to each Draft Resolution will be read to the body and voted upon before the main body of the Draft Resolution as a whole is put to a vote. The Committee will adopt Directives and Unfriendly Amendments to Directives if these documents pass with a simple majority. Specialized committees should refer to their background guides or Committee Directors for information concerning specific voting procedures. Unless otherwise specified by the Secretariat, each Committee may pass as many resolutions as it agrees are necessary to efficiently address the Topic

Delegates who requested to be noted as “Present and Voting” are unable to abstain during voting procedure. Abstentions will not be counted in the tallying of a majority. For example, 5 yes votes, 4 no votes, and 7 abstentions means that the Directive passes.

## Roll Call Voting

A counted placard vote will be considered sufficient unless any delegate to the committee motions for a Roll Call Vote. If a Roll Call Vote is requested, the committee must comply. All delegates must vote: “For,” “Against,” “Abstain,” or “Pass.”

During a Roll Call vote, any delegate who answers, “Pass,” reserves his/her vote until the Committee Director has exhausted the Roll. However, once the Committee Director returns to “Passing” Delegates, they must vote: “For” or “Against.”

## Voting with Rights

During a Roll Call vote delegates may vote “For with Rights” or “Against with Rights.” Delegates will be granted 30 seconds to explain their reasons for voting for or against a draft resolution. This time will come after the tabulation of votes.

Delegates should use this option sparingly. It is meant for delegates who feel that their vote may seem off policy, despite it being correct. The acceptance of rights is up to the director’s discretion. If a speaker goes off topic during their allotted time the director will rule their speech dilatory and move to the next in order.

## Accepting by Acclamation

This motion may be stated when the Committee Director asks for points or motions. If a Roll Call Vote is requested, the motion to Accept by Acclamation is voided. If a delegate believes a Directive will pass without opposition, he or she may move to accept the Directive by acclamation. The motion passes unless a single delegate shows opposition. An abstention is not considered opposition. Should the motion fail, the committee will move directly into a Roll Call Vote.

# Introduction

After rising to prominence because of the peninsula's status as the birthplace of Islam and an important trading center, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia became relatively unimportant on the world stage for centuries after the 7th century.<sup>1</sup> The nation only regained prominence after large oil reserves were found in the early 20th century, bringing great wealth to a nation that was largely poor and underdeveloped in the past.<sup>2</sup> The complicated legacy of Saudi Arabia can partially be attributed to its history as the global base for the Islamic faith and its rapid economic growth after the discovery of oil in the nation.

However, despite the fact that the kingdom possesses immense wealth, they are still considered a harsh, medieval absolute monarchy that imposes strict Sharia law. Many perceive this phenomenon as a paradox and a hindrance to Saudi Arabian prosperity. Until the country can modernize socially and politically, how can it successfully manage to modernize economically and flourish? These concerns were largely left by the government until 2015, when Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz al Saud (widely referred to as Mohammad bin Salman, or even MbS colloquially)<sup>3</sup> became the apparent heir to the throne and the Minister of Defense after his father became King. He amassed even more power when he was appointed crown prince in early 2017,<sup>4</sup> allowing him to be known as the powerhouse of the country. Although he has only been in power for a few years, Salman has already implemented unprecedented and sweeping reforms, and shows no signs of slowing.

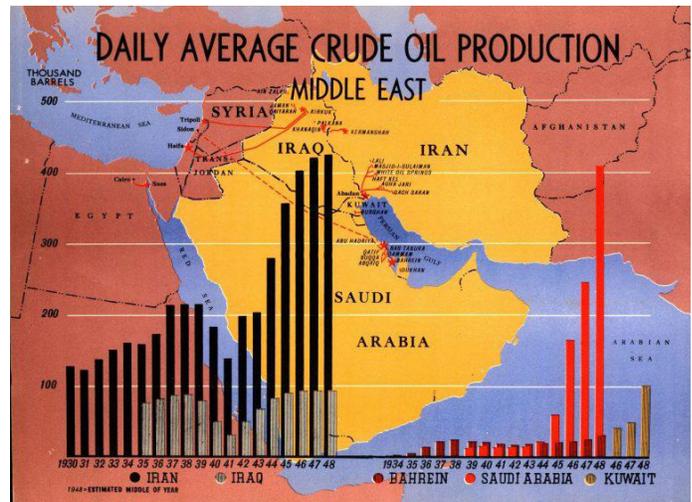


Fig. 1. "Middle East Oil Developments."Aramco pamphlet. 1948.

## Committee Description

In order to truly change the country, Saudi Arabia's Council of Ministers must evolve and support current efforts to create a more contemporary nation. The council directly advises the king, who also acts as the prime minister. It is one of the most influential bodies in the country, in addition to ulama--the Islamic religious leaders who also possess a central role in government decisions.<sup>5</sup> Although the government is technically considered an absolute monarchy, major policy decisions can be made outside the direct purview of the king. The influence of the royal family has on decisions is the reason why Mohammad bin Salman, the crown prince, has gained significant power in the nation. However, the king does greatly impact the policies the country implements.<sup>6</sup>

1 <https://www.saudiembassy.net/history>

2 <http://www.mepc.org/history-saudi-arabia>

3 <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/06/profile-saudi-crown-prince-mohammed-bin-salman-170621130040539.html>

4 Ibid.

5 The Foreign Policies of Arab States: The Challenge of Globalization. p. 358.

6 <https://www.britannica.com/place/Saudi-Arabia>

The council itself was established in 1953 by King Abdulaziz Al Saud, and was designed to “draft and oversee the implementation of the internal, external, financial, economic, education and defense policies as well as the general affairs of the State.”<sup>7</sup> Any decree the council issues is not made official unless it has a simple majority vote, and they must make their decisions with the nation’s interpretation of Sharia law in mind.<sup>8</sup> The only notable changes in the council before now occurred in 1993, when King Fahd restructured the council, altered its membership and wrote out a decree of what the duties of the ministers were (similar to a constitution).<sup>9</sup> He made sure that it is compulsory that every member of the council is Saudi-born, well-known and respected, not convicted of any wrongdoing or crime, and directly appointed by royal decree.<sup>10</sup>



Fig. 2. “Council of Ministers.”Kuwait Times. 2015.

However, in recent years, the current king of Saudi Arabia, Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, with the help of his son, the crown prince, has initiated radical reforms to the structure and powers of the council. One of these actions was effectively reshuffling the council, dismissing many members, and replacing them with new people. He also abolished the eleven government secretariats and organized them into two bodies: the Council of Political and Security Affairs (CPSA), and the Council of Economic and Development Affairs (CEDA).<sup>11</sup>

After more shifts post-2015, the Council is still evolving to this day. But how did the body get to where it is now?

## Background (1932-2015)

Understanding the Saudi context and history is vitally important when examining and analyzing the current political, social, and economic atmosphere of the country.

While the Arabian peninsula was a hotbed of tribal disputes for centuries, what we now know as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was not established until 1932; the various territories that existed within the nation finally united after years of Ottoman proxy control, colonial interests,<sup>12</sup> and a decentralization period. The Al Saud family began their rule over the territory exactly 30 years before, so by this point they were well-established and legitimate as the head of state and government. Just six years later in 1938, oil was discovered in the formerly struggling nation and production began under the American-controlled Arabian American Oil Company (ARAMCO), laying the foundation for amicable Saudi-American relations.<sup>13</sup> Production of oil increased significantly after World War II, solidifying the current regime that is still in power today.

Over the next several decades, the kingdom became wealthier and gained international prestige, which had both positive and negative effects on the country overall. For example, although the royal family gained immense wealth for the nation, allowing for a more developed economy, they also spent so much money on frivolous luxury items that they went into debt from borrowing money from foreign countries.<sup>14</sup>

7 <https://www.saudiembassy.net/council-ministers-system-0>

8 <https://web.archive.org/web/20110704194320/http://www.saudiembassy.net/about/Biographies-of-Ministers.aspx>

9 <https://www.boe.gov.sa/ViewSystemDetails.aspx?lang=en&SystemID=6&VersionID=11>

10 [https://www.saudiembassy.net/about/country-information/laws/The\\_Law\\_of\\_the\\_Council\\_of\\_Ministers.aspx](https://www.saudiembassy.net/about/country-information/laws/The_Law_of_the_Council_of_Ministers.aspx)

11 <https://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/saudi-arabia/mohammad-bin-nayef-takes-leading-role-in-saudi-arabia-1.1458374>

12 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-14703523>

13 Ibid.

14 <https://www.britannica.com/topic/history-of-Arabia>

In 1960, Saudi Arabia became one of the founding members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), which “coordinates and unifies petroleum policies in Member States.”<sup>15</sup> This partnership led to even greater riches for the nation, especially after the 1973 oil crisis.<sup>16</sup> Throughout the 1970s, the economy and infrastructure developed rapidly and stronger ties formed with the United States and other Western allies. However, in 1979, the al Saud family sensed a threat to their absolute control after two events: the close by Iranian Revolution, which overthrew the monarchy in favor of an Islamic Republic and caused unprecedented anti-government protests to occur in Saudi Arabia, and the seizure of the Grand Mosque, where Islamists militants took the mosque in order to criticize the Saudi regime for their lack of faith in Islam. Both of these events caused the kingdom to become severely restricted, with traditional values and Islamic teachings becoming a much more impactful part of society.<sup>17</sup>

The only significant protests after this point were brought about by the Arab Spring in 2011. The king at the time, King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, responded to his citizens calls for reform with an increase in welfare spending, but no change in political institutions were included in his promises to the nation.<sup>18</sup> This attitude of no vast changes to the current order in the nation was pervasive from the royal family for decades, until the mid-2010s.

## Modern Developments (2015-)

Not much significant societal progress was made throughout Saudi Arabia’s history under the rule of the Al Saud family, until 2015 when King Salman bin Abdulaziz inherited the throne. Frustrated with the current situation in his country and its reputation abroad, he along with his influential son (often seen as the real power behind the throne), Mohammad bin Salman, enacted a series of reforms that promised security and stability.<sup>19</sup>

For example, they fired the Minister of Justice , Mohammad bin Abdul Karim Issa, and the religious police chief, Abdulatif Al al-Shiekh, at that time, primarily for domestic political considerations since both of these men were enemies of the powerful Saudi conservatives.<sup>20</sup> In addition, the “decrees splurged around \$20 billion in bonus payments to citizens and streamlined an unruly bunch of ministerial committees into just two,” the CPSA and CEDA.<sup>21</sup>

Their primary motivations when first enacting these changes were multifaceted. Despite the fact that on the onset, many of these reforms benefited the conservatives of Saudi Arabia, the tide has now shifted the opposite way. As Mohammad bin Salman has taken more and more power, the conservatives-- the Islamists who used to be one of the most influential groups in the kingdom-- have fallen from grace and are losing the sway they once had.<sup>22</sup> Now, under Mohammad’s leadership, Saudi Arabia’s main goal is to gain international prestige and modernize the nation.

15 [http://www.opec.org/opec\\_web/en/about\\_us/24.htm](http://www.opec.org/opec_web/en/about_us/24.htm)

16 <https://www.britannica.com/place/Saudi-Arabia>

17 Ibid.

18 <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2011/02/2011223105328424268.html>

19 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-31358994>

20 <http://uk.businessinsider.com/r-sacking-two-reformers-and-handing-out-cash-new-saudi-king-signals-approach-2015-2>

21 Ibid.

22 [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/saudi-arabias-once-powerful-conservatives-silenced-by-reforms-and-repression/2018/06/04/5332bdec-3dad-11e8-955b-7d2e19b79966\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.3dee9e4e2e83](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/saudi-arabias-once-powerful-conservatives-silenced-by-reforms-and-repression/2018/06/04/5332bdec-3dad-11e8-955b-7d2e19b79966_story.html?utm_term=.3dee9e4e2e83)

Related to this overarching goal, the crown prince instituted extensive, detailed plans for the future, the most promising and idealistic of which is the Vision for Saudi Arabia 2030, which is the primary basis for this committee.

## Looking Ahead: Achieving the Saudi Vision 2030



المملكة العربية السعودية  
KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

Fig. 3. "Vision 2030." Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. 2016.

*Although in real life, the Council of Ministers has entrusted the CEDA with all of the responsibilities of carrying out the Saudi Vision 2030, this committee will operate as the group solely in charge of the venture. Because our committee will tackle more issues than just the vision, it is important that the ministers have the power to respond to unforeseen situations in addition to general administration of the plan.*

*The committee takes place in the present day, despite the fact that the vision is for 2030.*

Announced in 2016 and spearheaded by Mohammad bin Salman, the primary goals and vision statement of this promising proposal is to make Saudi Arabia a “vibrant society, thriving economy, and ambitious nation.”<sup>23</sup> In order to achieve this end, they have a comprehensive plan and agenda set forth with specific quantitative targets they would like to reach.

To achieve a *vibrant society*, they hope that citizens of Saudi Arabia will “be proud of their national identity and their ancient cultural heritage,” live by the Islamic principle of moderation, enjoy and revel in their beautiful environment, and support a strong social and healthcare system.<sup>24</sup>

To achieve a *thriving economy*, the vision stressed the need to build “an education system aligned with market needs [and that creates] economic opportunities,” “to diversify the economy and create jobs, and to improve the quality of services by aiding the business environment” and “leveraging [their] unique strategic location in connecting three continents.”<sup>25</sup>

To achieve an *ambitious nation*, the kingdom hopes to sustain an “effective, transparent, accountable, enabling and high-performing government.”<sup>26</sup>

On the Vision 2030 website, some of the major programs that are currently being implemented to achieve these broader goals are outlined. The specific programs set to be completed in 2020 include, but are not limited to:

- **Financial Sector Development Program:** aims to “enable financial institutions to support private sector growth, develop an advanced capital market, and promote and enable financial planning.”

23 <http://vision2030.gov.sa/en>

24 Ibid.

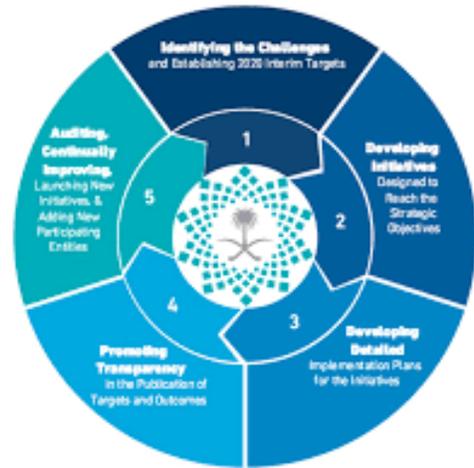
25 Ibid.

26 Ibid.

- **Quality of Life Program:** aims to “promote sports activities in society, achieve excellence in several sports, both regionally and globally, develop and diversify entertainment opportunities, and develop the Saudi contribution in both arts and culture.”
- **Privatization Program:** aims to strengthen the role of the private sector by transferring “ownership of specified assets from the government to the private sector.”
- **National Transformation Program:** aims to “establish an effective and integrated governance model” that will “translate the vision into various implementation programs that will accomplish its goals and directions.”
- **Fiscal Balance Program:** aims to “achieve budgetary balance, strengthen financial governance, increase non-oil revenues and improve spending on programs and projects.”
- **The Public Investment Fund Program:** aims to diversify “the Kingdom’s sources of development and growth,” and acts as “the engine behind economic diversity in the Kingdom.” It also aims to build strong economic partnerships.

Although these are just some of the current programs that have begun, they are very future-oriented, allowing for these programs, and new ones, to develop over time. The website for the Vision 2030 has incredibly detailed descriptions of the entire plan, and it is imperative to understand many of the complexities of the vision.

Since 14 years is a relatively short time to complete what they have planned, they have already hit the ground running and instituted numerous reforms toward their ultimate goal. The Vision 2030 is separated into three 5-year long parts, in order to set targets so the final goal can be more easily reached. The first of these parts is called the National Transformation Program, 2020, which focuses on “identifying the challenges faced by government bodies in the economic and developmental sectors,” and develops targets in order to achieve certain objectives.<sup>27</sup> There are 178 strategic objectives and 346 targets to be achieved before 2020, many of which are carried out by a specific ministry.



Operating Model of the National Transformation Program

Fig. 4. “Vision 2030.” Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. 2016.

So far, they have achieved significant accomplishments in just two years. For example, on the more socially driven side of the vision, women have been given significantly more rights steadily in the past few years. They were allowed to run for office in 2015, have physical education classes with boys and attend sporting events (including those indoors) in 2017,<sup>28</sup> and given the right to drive in 2018.<sup>29</sup>

In addition, they had more developments in their entertainment sector, when a General Authority for Entertainment was announced, investing significant amounts of money in the industry.<sup>30</sup> A few examples of how the sector has evolved are the first public live music concert in over a quarter century in 2017,<sup>31</sup> and a

27 [http://vision2030.gov.sa/sites/default/files/NTP\\_En.pdf](http://vision2030.gov.sa/sites/default/files/NTP_En.pdf)

28 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/30/saudi-arabia-to-allow-women-into-sports-stadiums-as-reform-push-intensifies>

29 <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/26/world/middleeast/saudi-arabia-women-drive.html>

30 <https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2017/06/01/saudi-arabia-allows-concerts-even-country-music>

31 Ibid.

partnership with the American company WWE that allowed for a wrestling match - Greatest Royal Rumble at King Abdullah's Sports City - in Jeddah on 2018.<sup>32</sup>

On a grander scale, Vision 2030 seems to be faring well, with the International Monetary Fund even praising their "good progress" (as of 2018).<sup>33</sup> Although there is temptation to waver from the initial strict plan of diversifying the economy due to rising oil prices, Saudi Arabia is making fantastic progress at this point and may want to give up short-term profit for long-term economic prosperity. They are attempting to shift from oil reliance by instituting a value added tax (VAT) and engaging in energy price reforms.<sup>34</sup>

However, despite some promising results, the plan itself faces its challenges. Some critics have commented that it is overly ambitious or unfeasible, both with the amount of time they have allotted and the amount of reform they plan to do.<sup>35</sup> A great example of potentially infeasible projects is the grand Red Sea luxury resort, and other measures proposed to increase tourism in Saudi Arabia. Many tourists, particularly Westerners, are hesitant to visit a country that has strict laws restricting freedoms that they usually take for granted, such as alcohol consumption, causing an inherent and immediate problem with investment in tourism infrastructure.<sup>36</sup>

However, despite the criticism of the plan itself, more broad and potent concerns arise when discussing Saudi Arabia's future.

## Potential Concerns

Despite the fact that many of these plans and actions seem promising, the new modern regime is not without its flaws. With Saudi Arabia's increasing arrests of human rights activists,<sup>37</sup> growing contribution to instability in the Middle East, and push towards a more autocratic leadership, many doubts and worries lie ahead of the vision.

Although Mohammad bin Salman has guaranteed more rights for women than ever before, many of his social accomplishments are shadowed by the continued use of cruel punishments for crime and a crackdown on human rights activists, seemingly paradoxical with the vision he is trying to create. The same people who fought for the rights being granted are the ones being locked up, and the Economist states that Salman is "granting his subjects more social rights, while taking away political ones."<sup>38</sup> Many critics, domestically and internationally, have called out his actions as being an abuse of power and a harmful precedent.

Another shift that has caused concerns for Saudi Arabia's future is its increasing role in Middle Eastern affairs, particularly those that are causing instability. Considered the "architect of the [Yemeni Civil] War" by some,<sup>39</sup> Mohammad bin Salman has been criticized for instigating a fight, making the humanitarian crisis worse in an already struggling Yemen, and contributing to war crimes and deaths of thousands of civilians.<sup>40</sup>

32 <https://www.wwe.com/worldwide/article/saudi-arabia-to-host-greatest-royal-rumble-april-2018>

33 <https://www.thenational.ae/business/economy/imf-commends-saudi-arabia-on-good-progress-on-implementing-vision-2030-1.733232>

34 Ibid.

35 <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-10-01/saudi-non-oil-growth-is-stagnating-even-with-2030-vision-chart>

36 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QcR3yeyBJ40&feature=youtu.be>

37 <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/01/27/saudi-arabia-limited-reforms-under-king-salman>

38 <https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2018/06/09/the-calculations-of-muhammad-bin-salman>

39 <http://time.com/5231166/mohammed-bin-salman-saudi-arabia-yemen/>

40 <https://www.amnesty.org/en/press-releases/2015/10/yemen-call-for-suspension-of-arms-transfers-to-coalition-and-ac->

There was also increasing tensions with Qatar after a 2017 diplomatic crisis, causing Mohammad bin Salman to almost invade the small nation, but he was stopped by American political intervention.<sup>41</sup>

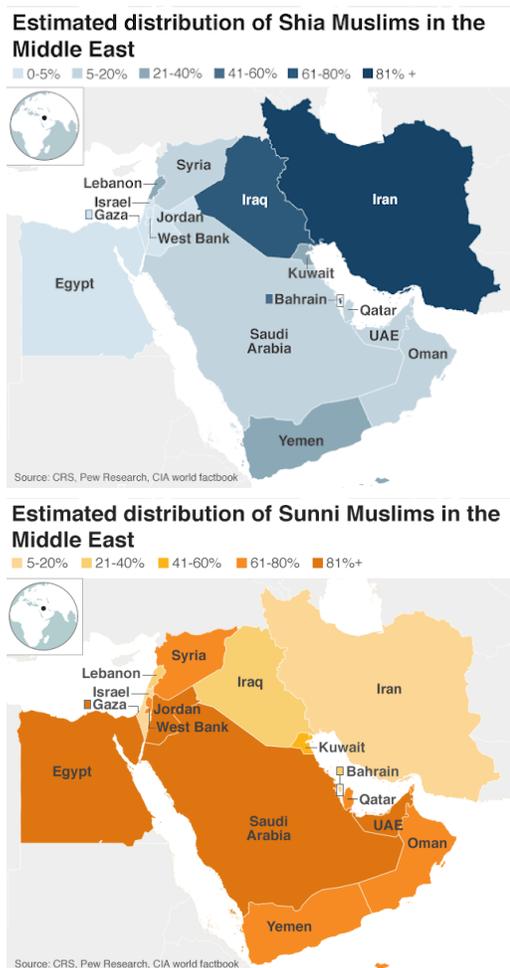


Fig. 5 - 6. "Estimates of Sunni/Shia in Middle East." CIA World Factbook.

The feud between Saudi Arabia and Iran, and its impact on the Syrian Civil War, are also important considerations for the current Saudi government. As the two dominant powers in the region, with deep religious divides between the Sunni and Shia sects, respectively, tensions have existed for decades. However, the situation became more dire after the Syrian Civil War broke out and both nations supported opposing sides, with Iran and Russia supporting the regime ruled by Bashar Al-Assad and Saudi Arabia backing many of the rebel groups fighting against this regime.<sup>42</sup> Mohammad bin Salman has directly contributed to the worsening tensions, as one of the major motivations for Saudi intervention in Yemen is to fight the Iranian influence. In addition, it is believed that the Saudis put pressure on the Lebanese prime minister to resign in order to destabilize the country, particularly the powerful political bloc of Hezbollah, a Shia militia group supported by Iran.<sup>43</sup> In addition, he is proving to be emboldened by support from the Trump Administration in the United States, and a tenuous relationship with Israel, who sees Iran as a mortal threat.<sup>44</sup>

The final change that has raised questions about the authenticity of Mohammad bin Salman's intentions are his perceived power grabs. A 2017 purge that was an alleged anti-corruption and opposition measure, where "eleven princes and dozens of other officials and businessmen" were under arrest in a hotel, raised some doubts.<sup>45</sup> Many saw this as MbS's attempt to "cement his own power by jailing potential rivals."<sup>46</sup> One year later, he is trying to gain control of the media, an unusual step for a country whose priority is modernizing and opening up to foreign exchanges.<sup>47</sup>

These concerns just scratch the surface of the backlash that Saudi Arabia, primarily MbS, has faced in recent years, with Saudi Arabian expert Bruce Riedel even calling it the "most volatile period in Saudi history in over a half-century."<sup>48</sup> How will Mohammad bin Salman, and the Council of Ministers as a whole, achieve their vision for their country with increased international scrutiny? Does Saudi Arabia have the ability to achieve all it wants to with this vision? It is your job as ministers to delve into these important questions and more in this crucial turning point of Saudi history.

countability-for-war-crimes/

41 [www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/saudi-arabia-king-salman-the-man-behind-the-most-dangerous-man-in-the-world-a6827716.html](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/saudi-arabia-king-salman-the-man-behind-the-most-dangerous-man-in-the-world-a6827716.html).

42 <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-42008809>

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid.

45 <https://www.vox.com/world/2017/11/6/16613088/saudi-arabia-princes-arrested-mohammed-bin-salman>

46 Ibid.

47 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/global-opinions/wp/2018/02/07/saudi-arabias-crown-prince-already-controlled-the-nations-media-now-hes-squeezing-it-even-further/>

48 <https://www.vox.com/world/2017/11/6/16613088/saudi-arabia-princes-arrested-mohammed-bin-salman>

# Recent Updates in 2018

## Tensions between Canada and Saudi Arabia:

In an intense feud that began over a simple tweet, tensions flared between these two nations in August of 2018. After an exchange between several official twitter accounts representing both states, with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia even accusing Canada of “an overt and blatant interference in the internal affairs of the Kingdom” and suspended “all new trade and investment transactions” on the same day.<sup>49</sup> Increasingly drastic actions were taken, such as Saudi Arabia calling for all Saudi students to leave Canadian universities, and creating “awareness” campaigns about Canada’s “human rights abuses.” This bizarre dispute ultimately resulted in a continuously strained relationship between the two nations, which as of November 2018 shows no immediate signs of improving.

## The death of Jamal Khashoggi:

Arguably the most impactful event that could potentially derail Mohammed bin Salman’s improving standing with the international community, his tactics and promises of a new Saudi Arabia were immediately called into question after it occurred. On October 2, 2018, a Saudi journalist who was a permanent resident of the United States and wrote for the Washington Post, Jamal Khashoggi, mysteriously went missing after walking into the Saudi consulate in Istanbul, Turkey. As soon as the news broke, the situation surrounding his death was incredibly suspicious, and investigations were conducted to learn more about what happened to him. Upon further investigation, it was proven that Khashoggi’s murder was “premeditated,” despite the fact that the Saudis initially claimed they had no involvement in his death.<sup>50</sup> Although they were slow to admit their role in his death, many nations and companies were convinced before they received a formal admission based on the evidence. For this reason, the international community has almost universally scorned the nation and Mohammed bin Salman in particular, and many businesses and nations that were taking part in the Saudi Arabia’s Future Investment Initiative decided to drop all participation from the summit, causing the venue to be nearly empty during the event.<sup>51</sup>

The future of Saudi Arabia’s Vision 2030 falls in the balance. He has defied some of its main goals and principles by continuing to murder journalists and activists who speak out against the government, despite claiming that he is striving for a freer nation. Can bin Salman still convince the international community, and Saudi citizens, that he is devoted to progressive values?

New events and updates relating to the committee will occur up until the actual conference. In order to be fully ready to compete in this committee, it is essential that as Ministers, you keep up with the news regarding Saudi Arabia. Before committee begins, I will give you a brief update on events that have happened that are significant and will allow you to ask questions on that or on anything relating to committee. If you have any questions about anything regarding this committee before the conference begins, please do not hesitate to ask me and email [gatormun@gmail.com](mailto:gatormun@gmail.com).

49 <https://www.businessinsider.com/timeline-of-canada-saudi-arabia-diplomatic-feud-over-human-rights-2018-8#august-5-saudi-arabias-foreign-ministry-hit-back-saying-that-canada-had-a-negative-and-surprising-attitude-and-was-making-an-entirely-false-claim-5>

50 <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-45812399>

51 <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/10/26/how-mohammed-bin-salman-turned-saudi-arabia-into-an-investment-wasteland-khashoggi/>

# Research Questions

How can your minister's portfolio powers/experiences help achieve the 2030 Vision? How can it further the reputation and growth of Saudi Arabia if it does not fall under the scope of this vision?

What is your minister's relation to the royal family (especially if they are not a part of it)? Research how, when, and why your position became a minister.

What kind of relationships does your minister possess with other important domestic and international parties? Did your minister work in a field that may not directly relate to their position in cabinet, giving them more expertise in different areas? Did your Minister work internationally and establish relationships and sympathies with certain countries?

How effective have the reforms been so far, especially in your ministry? What successes or failures can you minister utilize to create a better strategy for future success?

What is your role in the council as a whole? What is the role in your ministry? And what role does your ministry play in the council itself?

## Helpful Websites, Videos and Links

<https://web.archive.org/web/20110704194320/http://www.saudiembassy.net/about/Biographies-of-Ministers.aspx>)

<http://vision2030.gov.sa/en>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Council\\_of\\_Ministers\\_of\\_Saudi\\_Arabia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Council_of_Ministers_of_Saudi_Arabia) <https://www.saudiembassy.net/>

<https://youtu.be/QcR3yeyBJ40>

<https://youtu.be/DipzS0VH4PA>

<https://youtu.be/xuaR6zjQauE>

[http://vision2030.gov.sa/sites/default/files/NTP\\_En.pdf](http://vision2030.gov.sa/sites/default/files/NTP_En.pdf)

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/10/26/how-mohammed-bin-salman-turned-saudi-arabia-into-an-investment-wasteland-khashoggi/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2018/oct/17/why-is-saudi-arabia-under-fire-over-jamal-khashoggi-but-not-yemen>

# Positions

*Due to a power imbalance if they were present, both the prime minister (King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud) and the first deputy prime minister (Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud) will not be positions in committee.*

Although your position will have a specific role, i.e. Minister of Foreign Affairs or Health, know that you can still pass directives and discuss other issues related to the general topic. However, it is important to keep your initial position in mind throughout the course of the conference.

## **Khalid bin Abdulaziz bin Ayyaf Al Muqrin - Minister of the National Guard**

Prince Khalid holds one of the most prestigious positions in the Saudi hierarchy, being in charge of the internal security force that is responsible for protecting the royal family.<sup>52</sup> As a direct descendant of the royal family, he is devoted to the House of Saud, and the men he is in charge of must be deeply loyal as well. Prince Khalid is known for being incredibly loyal to Mohammad bin Salman, as his appointment was partially motivated by that fact.<sup>53</sup> The National Guard has 100,000 to 200,000 highly trained members, and together they represent one of the most powerful institutions in the country. (Important Note: Do NOT confuse with Muqrin bin Abdulaziz (the first person who shows up when you input this name into Google). They are not the same person.)

## **Abdulaziz bin Saud bin Nayef bin Abdulaziz Al Saud - Minister of the Interior**

Grandnephew to the king, Prince Abdullah bin Saud bin Nayef was appointed to his post in mid-2017, after serving as an advisor to the royal court and the defense ministry.<sup>54</sup> Before that, he graduated from Dhahran Private School and has a law degree from King Saud University. Prince Abdullah is in charge of a ministry focusing on “national security, naturalization, immigration and customs.”<sup>55</sup> Mohammad bin Salman holds this particular ministry in incredibly high regard, even thanking the minister for lowering the crime rate during his tenure.<sup>56</sup> He is also the youngest interior minister in the country’s history at 34; although his resume may not be as extensive as other councilmen, he is still an accomplished statesmen who has had proven results.

## **Adel bin Ahmed Al Jubeir - Minister of Foreign Affairs**

The second person in the country’s history who held this position and was not a member of the royal family, Al Jubeir is an accomplished diplomat who served as the Saudi Ambassador to the United States from 2007 to 2015, and a foreign policy minister to the late King Abdullah.<sup>57</sup> He obtained his undergraduate degrees in political science and economics from the University of North Texas, and his master’s in international relations from Georgetown University. As of 2018, Al-Jubeir has proven his loyalty to Mohammad bin Salman by reinforcing many of his foreign policy goals, such as Saudi intervention in Yemen and imposing sanctions on Iran.<sup>58</sup>

52 <https://www.thenational.ae/world/gcc/saudi-arabia-s-national-guard-protectors-of-the-royal-family-and-islam-s-holiest-sites-1.674170>

53 <https://www.eurasiareview.com/17112017-unpacking-the-unprecedented-churning-in-saudi-arabia-analysis/>

54 <http://www.arabnews.com/node/1118321/saudi-arabia>

55 <http://dro.dur.ac.uk/4561/1/4561.pdf?DDD35+dgi4lh>

56 <http://www.arabnews.com/node/1289516/saudi-arabia>

57 <https://www.saudiembassy.net/archive/2007/news/page647.aspx>

58 <https://www.cnn.com/2017/11/09/saudi-arabia-foreign-minister-calls-for-sanctions-on-iran-for-its-support-of-terrorism.html>

## **Saleh bin Abdulaziz Al Ash-Shaikh- Minister of Islamic Affairs**

Another non-royal member of the council, Al ash-Sheikh is a member of an influential religious family in the country. He graduated from Imam Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University in Riyadh, and has written several books about Islam.<sup>59</sup> The Ministry is in charge of “taking care of everything related to Islamic and Awqaf affairs, mosques, and guidance and advocacy to God; serving the houses; sponsoring and developing endowments to spread the call; taking care of Islamic issues; to communicating with Islamic societies and centers.”<sup>60</sup>

## **Ahmed bin Mohammed Al-Issa - Minister of Education**

Appointed in 2015, Al-Issa is an accomplished university administrator who has worked in a plethora of different universities. He graduated with an undergraduate degree in history from King Saud University in 1983, and his master’s and Ph.D in education from Pennsylvania State University.<sup>61</sup> As minister, Al-Issa has prioritized e-learning and increased use of technology in the classroom, partially motivated by his experience in technologically-oriented universities, and has started programs to achieve this aim.<sup>62</sup> In addition, he signed an agreement with the Swedish Minister of Higher Education, expanding educational opportunities for Saudis in Sweden.<sup>63</sup>

## **Waleed bin Mohammed Al Samaani- Minister of Justice**

Facing increased scrutiny due to recent events and perceived failures of the Saudi justice system, Al Samaani serves as the Minister of Justice and the president of the Supreme Judicial Court.<sup>64</sup> His ministry is responsible for the administration of the court system in the nation.<sup>65</sup> Although there are not many resources about Al Samaani himself, his ministry is vastly important to the future of Saudi Arabia, as the increasing number of arrests of human rights advocates is considered suspicious by many and his livelihood will be under increasing pressure. It is important for him to continue to legitimize his courts and ministry, as he has re-asserted that it is impartial many times.<sup>66</sup>

## **Khalid bin Abdulaziz Al Falih - Minister of Energy, Industry and Natural Resources**

Al Falih previously served as the Minister of Health from 2015 to his appointment to his new post in 2016. Before that, he served as the CEO of Aramco (now called Saudi Aramco).<sup>67</sup> He earned his bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering from Texas A&M University, and an MBA from King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals.<sup>68</sup> His ministry is responsible for “developing and implementing policies concerning petroleum and related products.”<sup>69</sup>

59 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saleh\\_bin\\_Abdul-Aziz\\_Al\\_ash-Sheikh#cite\\_note-Baamir-2](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saleh_bin_Abdul-Aziz_Al_ash-Sheikh#cite_note-Baamir-2)

60 [https://www.eyeofriyadh.com/directory/details/50\\_ministry-of-islamic-affairs-dawah-and-guidance](https://www.eyeofriyadh.com/directory/details/50_ministry-of-islamic-affairs-dawah-and-guidance)

61 <https://www.moe.gov.sa/en/TheMinistry/SectorsOfTheMinistry/Pages/TheMinister.aspx>

62 <https://www.thebusinessyear.com/saudi-arabia-2016/work-to-expand/interview>

63 <http://www.arabnews.com/node/1162526/saudi-arabia>

64 <http://saudigazette.com.sa/article/540854/SAUDI-ARABIA/Our-judiciary-proceedings-are-fair-Al-Samaani>

65 [http://www.nyulawglobal.org/globalex/Saudi\\_Arabia.html](http://www.nyulawglobal.org/globalex/Saudi_Arabia.html)

66 <http://www.arabnews.com/saudi-arabia/news/711896>

67 <https://web.archive.org/web/20160509102941/http://money.cnn.com/2016/05/08/investing/saudi-arabia-oil-ope-minister/>

68 <https://web.archive.org/web/20090724064020/http://www.ameinfo.com/173952.html>

69 <http://www.saudinf.com/main/c6u.htm>

## **Nabeel bin Mohammed Al-Amoudi - Minister of Transport**

Prior to his appointment to minister in 2017, Al-Amoudi served as the “chairman for the General Authority of Ports, chairman of Aramco Services Company and acting director for long-term planning department,”<sup>70</sup> to name a few of his notable accomplishments. The transportation sector is incredibly important to achieving the Saudi Vision as advanced infrastructure, particularly in transportation, is a great way to modernize any nation. Al-Amoudi graduated with a bachelor’s degree in engineering from Stanford and a doctorate from Harvard Law School. He hopes to create a railway system throughout the country and a new airport in Jeddah, and has stated that “transportation is a main pillar of the national economy and a key driver of the economic renaissance that will take place under the Saudi Vision.”<sup>71</sup>

## **Majid bin Abdullah Al Qasabi - Minister of Commerce and Investment**

Originally a civil engineer by trade, Al Qasabi was appointed to this post in 2016. He possesses a bachelor’s degree in civil engineering, two master’s degrees in engineering management and civil engineering, and a doctorate in engineering management, all from American universities. He served as a professor for several years before becoming the Secretary General of the Jeddah Chamber of Commerce in 1998. He had many different careers until he broke through in the political sphere in 2010 when he became an advisor at the Crown Prince’s Court in 2010 and assisted the royal family until his minister appointment.<sup>72</sup> His role in the Vision 2030 is an important one, as one of his goals is expanding and growing small- and medium-sized enterprises.<sup>73</sup>

## **Mohammad al-Tuwaijri - Minister of Economy and Planning**

Appointed in 2017 after serving as the vice minister for the same ministry, Al-Tuwaijri is an accomplished banker with over 21 years of experience under his belt, 12 of which he served in executive management roles in Saudi banks.<sup>74</sup> He had significant influence on the Saudi economy even before his appointment and has been a very public figure in the economic reform agenda.<sup>75</sup> Before joining the council, he served as a Saudi Royal Air Force pilot, and deputy chairman and chief executive of HSBC Bank Middle East. He also earned a bachelor’s degree in aerodynamics from the Air Force Academy and a graduate degree in business from Riyadh King Saud University. Al-Tuwaijri has been a vocal supporter of balancing the country’s budget and privatization, among other goals.

## **Tawfiq bin Fawzan Al Rabiah - Minister of Health**

Originally a computer engineer by trade, Al Rabiah earned his bachelor’s degrees in the field of quantitative business methods from King Saud University, two master’s degrees in computer science and information science from the same university, and a PhD in computer science from the University of Pittsburgh.<sup>76</sup> His educational background prepared him well for his first position on the council, as he was appointed the Minister of Commerce and Investment in 2011, and served until 2016, when he was moved to his current role. Before his appointment, he was the Director General of the Saudi Industrial Property Authority from 2007-2011. One of his primary goals in his current position is to utilize technology to create simple and innovative solutions to healthcare issues.<sup>77</sup>

70 <http://www.arabnews.com/node/1298371/saudi-arabia>

71 Ibid.

72 <https://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/saudi-arabia/saudi-king-s-son-on-fast-track-to-power-1.1458739>

73 <https://www.thebusinessyear.com/saudi-arabia-2017/providing-the-tools/interview>

74 <https://www.thenational.ae/business/economy/seasoned-saudi-banker-and-technocrat-steers-region-s-biggest-economy-1.673197>

75 Ibid.

76 <https://www.moh.gov.sa/en/Ministry/Minister/Pages/default.aspx>

77 Ibid.

## **Awwad Saleh al-Awwad - Minister of Culture and Information**

Appointed in 2017, al-Awwad has served in a variety of different sectors during his career. Obtaining his bachelor's degree in administration sciences from King Saud University, a master's in Banking Operations from Boston University, and a PhD in financial markets from the University of Warwick, he is a heavily educated man with a strong business background. Al-Awwad served as Saudi Arabia's envoy in Germany from 2015 to his appointment to his current position. Prior to this, he worked as an economic and financial consultant for the crown prince's office, and worked to develop investment procedure.<sup>78</sup> The ministry as a whole is in charge of "regulating the media of Saudi Arabia and the communications between Saudi Arabia and other countries."<sup>79</sup>

## **Sulaiman Al-Hamdan - Minister of Civil Service**

Initially starting his tenure as a minister in the transportation ministry, he was appointed to his current position after serving one year in this ministry. He attained a bachelor's degree in administrative sciences from King Saud University, and a master's degree in business management from the University of New Haven.<sup>80</sup> Before he was a member of the government, he was the former president of the General Authority of Civil Aviation and the CEO of Nas Holding Co.<sup>81</sup> The ministry itself utilizes human resources and other capabilities in order to improve performance and productivity of workers, upgrade its employees and services, and advance the administrative development process in various sectors of the government."<sup>82</sup>

## **Mohammed Al-Jadaan - Minister of Finance**

Appointed in 2016, Al-Jadaan is a lawyer who replaced the incumbent minister who had served in his position for 20 years, another product of the cabinet reshuffle. He earned his bachelor's degrees in Islamic Sharia and specialty Islamic economics in from Imam Muhammad bin Saud Islamic University and a law degree from the Institute of Public Administration in Riyadh.<sup>83</sup> During his professional life before government service, he primarily served as a commercial lawyer, specializing in finance and financial markets. Before his current appointment, he served as the chairman of the Capital Markets Authority from 2015-2016. He heavily supports the Vision 2030's plans for privatization, financial stability, and increased spending efficiency, among other initiatives.<sup>84</sup>

## **Abdurrahman Abdul Mohsen Al-Fadil - Minister of Environment, Water and Agriculture**

An accomplished engineer and businessman, Al-Fadil was appointed to work for the former Minister of Agriculture in 2015. However, when the ministry was consolidated into its current iteration, he took over as the minister of the resulting and current ministry. Before his time on the council, he earned a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from King Saud University. He worked in the petroleum industries sector for several years, ultimately culminating in his appointment as CEO of Almarai Co in 2000, finishing his tenure when he was first appointed in 2015. He is the chairman of many committees related to his ministry, and has extensive experience with operational management and corporate social responsibility.<sup>85</sup>

78 Ibid.

79 [https://web.archive.org/web/20110426144919/http://www.saudiembassy.net/about/ministry\\_addresses\\_in\\_saudi\\_arabia.aspx](https://web.archive.org/web/20110426144919/http://www.saudiembassy.net/about/ministry_addresses_in_saudi_arabia.aspx)

80 <http://www.arabnews.com/node/1317671/saudi-arabia>

81 Ibid.

82 <https://www.mcs.gov.sa/En/Ministry/Pages/VisionandMission.aspx>

83 <https://www.mof.gov.sa/en/about/Pages/ministercv.aspx>

84 Ibid.

85 <https://www.mewa.gov.sa/en/Ministry/AboutMinister/Pages/MinisterCv.aspx>

## **Muhammad Saleh Benten - Minister of Hajj and Umrah**

Previously serving as the CEO of the Saudi Post, Benten was appointed to his current position in 2016. He has a bachelor's and master's degree in electrical engineering from King Saud University for petroleum and minerals, and a doctorate in computer engineering from the University of Colorado.<sup>86</sup> Before his time as the CEO of the Post, he was the deputy chair of the Ministry of the Hajj and Umrah, where he “introduced and deployed the e-Umrah project, which currently facilitates the annual Umrah for more than five million people through an automated tracking, issuance visa, and logistics reservation system.”<sup>87</sup> The ministry itself is in charge of overseeing all aspects of the Hajj and Umrah to ensure safe passage and logistical smoothness during the entirety of the pilgrimage.<sup>88</sup>

## **Majed bin Abdullah Al Hogail - Minister of Housing**

A businessman by trade, Al Hogail was appointed to his current position in 2015. He obtained his bachelor's in accounting from King Saud University, M.B.A. from the University of Illinois, and earned several business related distinctions in New Mexico and Lausanne, Switzerland.<sup>89</sup> In his professional life, he served as a deputy finance director at the Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency, and was a member of the board of directors in a plethora of other companies, including some for real estate development.<sup>90</sup> The duty of the ministry is to “organize and facilitate a balanced and sustainable housing environment by developing programs” aimed at making housing more affordable and of higher quality.<sup>91</sup>

## **Abdullah bin Amer Al-Swaha - Minister of Communication and Information Technology**

Al-Swaha was appointed to this ministry in 2015. He has “15 years of experience and success in IT, entrepreneurship, executive and digital consulting and held several executive positions in the private and public sectors.”<sup>92</sup> He earned a bachelor's degree in computer science from Seattle College in Washington, and another one in electrical engineering from King Fahd University. In the public sector, he was the Director-General of the Digital Transformation Office and is in charge of expediting the realization process of the Vision 2030 through digital infrastructure to speed up the achievement of its objectives. In the private sector, he served as the CEO for Cisco Saudi Arabia and held several executive positions before he was promoted to that position.<sup>93</sup>

## **Abdullatif bin Abdulmalik Al Shaikh - Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs**

The third member of his family to be appointed to the council in 2015, Al Shaikh is a graduate from King Saud University, where he earned a bachelor's in engineering.<sup>94</sup> In his professional life, “he first served as the Program Management Officer of the Riyadh Development Authority,” before accepting the position of Director at the Center of Significant Projects and Planning at the Riyadh Region Municipality, one of the highest civil service posts in the capital.<sup>95</sup> The ministry itself oversees and regulates “the municipalities across the country's cities, towns and villages,” and is aiming to achieve “sustainable cities and communities that ensure developmental equilibrium between the economy, the communities and the environment.”<sup>96</sup>

86 <https://idc-cema.com/eng/profiles/presenter/268406-his-excellency-dr-muhammad-saleh-benten?lan=ENG>

87 Ibid.

88 <http://web.haj.gov.sa/english/about/Pages/mission.html>

89 <http://susris.com/officials/majed-bin-abdullah-al-huqail/>

90 Ibid.

91 <https://housing.sa/en/about-us>

92 <https://www.mcit.gov.sa/en/ministers-history/98868>

93 Ibid.

94 <https://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/saudi-arabia/saudi-king-s-son-on-fast-track-to-power-1.1458739>

95 Ibid.

96 <https://www.linkedin.com/company/momraksa>

## Musaad bin Mohammed Al Aiban - Minister of State

As one of the only ministers who survived the cabinet reshuffle , his position in committee is incredibly unique. He serves as both a member of the CPSA and the CEDA, and is the only non-royal to serve on both of these committees. He is a graduate of Harvard University, and is seen as the kingdom's most efficient behind-the-scenes official.<sup>97</sup> As a Minister of State, he does not directly oversee any ministry, but his role in the two sub-cabinets, influence over the country, and favor in the royal family will be incredibly vital to his success. He has accompanied many members of the Saud family to state visits and other important diplomatic affairs, and he has earned the trust of many of Salman's predecessors with his undying loyalty to the family.<sup>98</sup>

---

97 <https://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/saudi-arabia/mohammad-bin-nayef-takes-leading-role-in-saudi-arabia-1.1458374>

98 Ibid.

# Works Cited

---

- Al-Rasheed, Madawi. "A History of Saudi Arabia." *Middle East Policy Council*, www.mepec.org/history-saudi-arabia.
- Baker, Sinéad. "The full timeline of Canada and Saudi Arabia's feud over jailed human rights activists." *Business Insider*, Insider Inc., 24 Oct. 2018, <https://www.businessinsider.com/timeline-of-canada-saudi-arabia-diplomatic-feud-over-human-rights-2018-8>.
- Beauchamp, Zack. "The Purge in Saudi Arabia, Explained." Vox, Vox, 6 Nov. 2017, [www.vox.com/world/2017/11/6/16613088/saudi-arabia-princes-arrested-mohammed-bin-salman](http://www.vox.com/world/2017/11/6/16613088/saudi-arabia-princes-arrested-mohammed-bin-salman).
- Bin Salman, Mohammad. "Our Vision: Saudi Arabia." *Goals | Saudi Vision 2030*, vision2030.gov.sa/en.
- "Brief History." *OPEC*, www.opec.org/opec\_web/en/about\_us/24.htm.
- "Council of Ministers System." *About Saudi Arabia*, The Embassy of The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, [www.saudiembassy.net/council-ministers-system-0](http://www.saudiembassy.net/council-ministers-system-0).
- Dahmani, Youssef. 1979 : *When Juhayman Al-Otaybi Led the Grand Mosque Seizure of the Masjid Al Haram in Mecca*. Yabiladi.com, 28 May 2018, [en.yabiladi.com/articles/details/65386/1979-when-juhayman-al-otaybi-grand.html](http://en.yabiladi.com/articles/details/65386/1979-when-juhayman-al-otaybi-grand.html).
- Economist Magazine, director. *Saudi Arabia: Open for Tourists | The Economist*. YouTube, The Economist, 31 July 2018, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=QcR3yeyBJ40](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QcR3yeyBJ40).
- Evans, Brian. "The Nationalization of ARAMCO and Its Importance to Saudi Arabia." *Washington State University*, 31 Aug. 2017, [history.libraries.wsu.edu/history105-06-stratton-fall2017/2017/08/31/u-s-oil-purchases-from-the-middle-east/](http://history.libraries.wsu.edu/history105-06-stratton-fall2017/2017/08/31/u-s-oil-purchases-from-the-middle-east/).
- Fahim, Kareem. "Saudi Arabia's Once-Powerful Conservatives Silenced by Reforms and Repression." *The Washington Post*, WP Company, 5 June 2018, [www.washingtonpost.com/world/saudi-arabias-once-powerful-conservatives-silenced-by-reforms-and-repression/2018/06/04/5332bdec-3dad-11e8-955b-7d2e19b79966\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.3dee9e4e2e83](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/saudi-arabias-once-powerful-conservatives-silenced-by-reforms-and-repression/2018/06/04/5332bdec-3dad-11e8-955b-7d2e19b79966_story.html?utm_term=.3dee9e4e2e83).
- France-Presse, Agence. "Saudi Arabia to Allow Women into Sports Stadiums as Reform Push Intensifies." *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 30 Oct. 2017, [www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/30/saudi-arabia-to-allow-women-into-sports-stadiums-as-reform-push-intensifies](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/30/saudi-arabia-to-allow-women-into-sports-stadiums-as-reform-push-intensifies).
- Hennigan, W.J. "Saudi Crown Prince Aids Yemen as He Hits It With Airstrikes." *Time*, Time, 6 Apr. 2018, [time.com/5231166/mohammed-bin-salman-saudi-arabia-yemen/](http://time.com/5231166/mohammed-bin-salman-saudi-arabia-yemen/).
- Hirsh, Michael. "How Mohammad Bin Salman Turned Saudi Arabia Into An Investment Wasteland." *Foreign Policy*, Graham Holdings Company, 26 Oct. 2018, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/10/26/how-mohammed-bin-salman-turned-saudi-arabia-into-an-investment-wasteland-khashoggi/>.

“How Will the New King Salman Change Saudi Arabia? - BBC News.” *BBC*, BBC, 11 Feb. 2015, [www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-31358994](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-31358994).

Hubbard, Ben. “Saudi Arabia Agrees to Let Women Drive.” *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 26 Sept. 2017, [www.nytimes.com/2017/09/26/world/middleeast/saudi-arabia-women-drive.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/26/world/middleeast/saudi-arabia-women-drive.html).

“Jamal Khashoggi: All you need to know about Saudi journalist’s death.” *BBC*, BBC, 31 Oct. 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-45812399>.

Khashoggi, Jamal. “Opinion | Saudi Arabia’s Crown Prince Already Controlled the Nation’s Media. Now He’s Squeezing It Even Further.” *The Washington Post*, WP Company, 7 Feb. 2018, [www.washingtonpost.com/news/global-opinions/wp/2018/02/07/saudi-arabias-crown-prince-already-controlled-the-nations-media-now-hes-squeezing-it-even-further/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/global-opinions/wp/2018/02/07/saudi-arabias-crown-prince-already-controlled-the-nations-media-now-hes-squeezing-it-even-further/).

McDowall, Angus. “Saudi Arabia’s New King Might Be Turning Away from Modern Reforms.” *Business Insider*, *Business Insider*, 3 Feb. 2015, [uk.businessinsider.com/r-sacking-two-reformers-and-handing-out-cash-new-saudi-king-signals-approach-2015-2](http://uk.businessinsider.com/r-sacking-two-reformers-and-handing-out-cash-new-saudi-king-signals-approach-2015-2).

Nereim, Vivian. “Saudi Non-Oil Growth Is Stagnating Even With 2030 Vision: Chart.” *Bloomberg.com*, Bloomberg, 1 Oct. 2017, [www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-10-01/saudi-non-oil-growth-is-stagnating-even-with-2030-vision-chart](http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-10-01/saudi-non-oil-growth-is-stagnating-even-with-2030-vision-chart).

Osborne, Samuel. “The Man behind the ‘Most Dangerous Man in the World’” *The Independent*, Independent Digital News and Media, 22 Jan. 2016, [www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/saudi-arabia-king-salman-the-man-behind-the-most-dangerous-man-in-the-world-a6827716.html](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/saudi-arabia-king-salman-the-man-behind-the-most-dangerous-man-in-the-world-a6827716.html).

*Profile: Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman*. Al Jazeera, 14 Dec. 2017, [www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/06/profile-saudi-crown-prince-mohammed-bin-salman-170621130040539.html](http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/06/profile-saudi-crown-prince-mohammed-bin-salman-170621130040539.html).

“Saudi Arabia Allows Concerts-Even Country Music.” *The Economist*, The Economist Newspaper, 1 June 2017, [www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2017/06/01/saudi-arabia-allows-concerts-even-country-music](http://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2017/06/01/saudi-arabia-allows-concerts-even-country-music).

“Saudi Arabia: Limited Reforms Under King Salman.” *Human Rights Watch*, 27 Jan. 2016, [www.hrw.org/news/2016/01/27/saudi-arabia-limited-reforms-under-king-salman](http://www.hrw.org/news/2016/01/27/saudi-arabia-limited-reforms-under-king-salman).

“Saudi Arabia Profile - Timeline.” *BBC*, 24 Apr. 2018, [www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-14703523](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-14703523).

“Saudi King Announces New Benefits.” *Al Jazeera*, 10 Mar. 2011, [www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2011/02/2011223105328424268.html](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2011/02/2011223105328424268.html).

“Saudi Posts Record Deficit, Cuts Fuel Subsidies - Govt to Adjust Water, Electricity, Fuel Prices over 5 Years.” *ARAB TIMES - KUWAIT NEWS*, 29 Dec. 2015, [www.arabtimesonline.com/news/saudi-posts-record-deficit-cuts-fuel-subsidies-govt-to-adjust-water-electricity-fuel-prices-over-5-years/](http://www.arabtimesonline.com/news/saudi-posts-record-deficit-cuts-fuel-subsidies-govt-to-adjust-water-electricity-fuel-prices-over-5-years/).

Serjeant, Robert Bertram, et al. “History of Arabia.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 31 Oct. 2012, [www.britannica.com/topic/history-of-Arabia](http://www.britannica.com/topic/history-of-Arabia).

Staff, WWE.com. "Saudi Arabia to Host the Greatest Royal Rumble This April." *WWE*, WWE, 9 Apr. 2018, [www.wwe.com/worldwide/article/saudi-arabia-to-host-greatest-royal-rumble-april-2018](http://www.wwe.com/worldwide/article/saudi-arabia-to-host-greatest-royal-rumble-april-2018).

Townsend, Sarah. "IMF Commends Saudi Arabia on 'Good Progress' on Implementing Vision 2030 ." *The National*, The National, 23 May 2018, [www.thenational.ae/business/economy/imf-commends-saudi-arabia-on-good-progress-on-implementing-vision-2030-1.733232](http://www.thenational.ae/business/economy/imf-commends-saudi-arabia-on-good-progress-on-implementing-vision-2030-1.733232).

Withnall, Adam. "All Change at the Top for Saudi Government - but Is King Salman on the War Path?" *The Independent*, Independent Digital News and Media, 29 Apr. 2015, [www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/saudi-arabias-king-salman-announces-major-cabinet-reshuffle-and-new-heirs-to-throne-10212407.html](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/saudi-arabias-king-salman-announces-major-cabinet-reshuffle-and-new-heirs-to-throne-10212407.html).

"Yemen: Call for Suspension of Arms Transfers to Coalition and Accountability for War Crimes." *Amnesty International*, 7 Oct. 2015, [www.amnesty.org/en/press-releases/2015/10/yemen-call-for-suspension-of-arms-transfers-to-coalition-and-accountability-for-war-crimes/](http://www.amnesty.org/en/press-releases/2015/10/yemen-call-for-suspension-of-arms-transfers-to-coalition-and-accountability-for-war-crimes/).