



**ABRAHAM ACCORDS**  
PEACE INSTITUTE

# **ABRAHAM ACCORDS PROGRESS REPORT**

**2021: A YEAR IN REVIEW**

# Introduction

The Abraham Accords Peace Institute is a non-partisan, non-profit U.S. organization dedicated to supporting the implementation and expansion of the historic Abraham Accords peace agreements. The mission of the Institute is to strengthen the new bonds created through the Abraham Accords and ensure that these relationships achieve their fullest potential.

The Institute is the primary platform for disseminating the progress made through the Accords, and for the development of new growth opportunities by convening and leveraging public and private sector entities for discussion, planning, and cooperation. Its focus is on deepening trade, investment, tourism and people-to-people ties among Abraham Accords members, and on expanding the circle of countries which are part of the accords.

Since the historic agreements were reached last year there has been remarkable progress -- and yet we all recognize there is even greater potential ahead. We look forward to working with the Accord members and our partners to assess progress made in the past year and the conditions which should be preserved or expanded and identify obstacles and impediments which constrain trade and investment which must be resolved. It should inform and guide our efforts to establish priorities and streamline processes leveraging cooperative effort to achieve the full potential between and among Accords members.

While the historic Abraham Accords have led to an exciting surge in economic ties between Israel and its new Arab partners, the Accords' promise goes much deeper than bilateral business deals. The peace agreements have the potential to transform the region, creating a new Middle East corridor of prosperity, stability, and trade. 2022 will be a critical year for realizing this potential. While the Abraham Accords have the potential to transform the region, such a transformation will not happen on its own. We must focus our time, energy and effort on those actions which serve to liberate the economic potential of the Accords, adopt a strategic approach which utilizes the unique contributions of each member, cut through bureaucratic red-tape, and account for integration with global markets. As the enormous benefits of this win-win regional cooperation become increasingly clear, more countries will likely join the Abraham Accords, thereby creating a virtuous circle of peace and growth.

## DIPLOMATIC ENDEAVORS

2021 was a year in which the potential inherent in the Abraham Accords began to become a reality. Embassies were opened, first-ever ambassadors were appointed and presented their credentials, foreign ministers and prime ministers made historic visits and signed diplomatic agreements, and the Accords member nations celebrated the one-year anniversaries of the signing of their historic agreements.

### Major Events in 2021:

- On February 14th, the first ever UAE Ambassador to Israel Mohamed Al Khaja took office.
- In May 2021, the Abraham Accords Peace Institute was founded to deepen the normalization agreements by working to expand trade, investment, tourism, and people-to-people connections between the signatory countries.
- In August 2021, Israel's Foreign Minister Yair Lapid visited Morocco, where he inaugurated the Israeli liaison office in Rabat and signed numerous MOU's, including [an agreement establishing a political consultation mechanism](#) that would facilitate the strengthening of relations between the foreign ministries.
- On September 13th, Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett [visited Egypt and met with](#) President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi to discuss furthering relations between Israel and Egypt, and other countries in the region.
- On September 13th, Abraham Accords countries' UN Ambassadors [co-hosted a one-year anniversary celebration](#) in New York.
- On September 14th, the Abraham Accords Peace Institute [hosted an event in Washington](#) to celebrate the one-year anniversary of the signing of the Abraham Accords, drawing wide-ranging representation from the current US Administration, Congress, the Israeli Knesset, and Ambassadors from the Abraham Accords member countries, as well as Egypt and Jordan.
- On September 14th, President of Israel, Isaac Herzog, [accepted the credentials](#) of the first Bahrain ambassador to Israel Khaled Yousif al-Jalahma.
- On September 17th, in an event commemorating the one-year anniversary earlier in the week of the signing the Abraham Accords, United States Secretary of State Antony Blinken praised the Accords and [pledged that the Biden administration would actively work to support and expand the Accords.](#)
- In September 2021, [a joint Israel/UAE mission](#) rescued dozens of Afghan women and Human rights activists from Kabul in the aftermath of the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan.
- In September 2021, Israel, UAE, Bahrain, and Morocco [submitted a joint statement](#) at the United Nations Human rights Council (HCR) emphasizing the value of integrating women in the peace processes and called for increased influence of women on issues of human rights, and other issues.

- On September 27th, Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett [met with](#) Bahraini Foreign Minister Abdulatif Alzayani and UAE Minister of State Khalifa Shaheen Almarar on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York.
- On September 30th, Israel Foreign Minister Yair Lapid [visited Bahrain](#), where he signed numerous agreements and inaugurated the Israel embassy in Bahrain.
- On October 11th, the Knesset Abraham Accords Caucus [was launched](#), co-chaired by Ofir Akunis and Ruth Wasserman Lande.
- On October 12th and 13th, officials from Israel and the six Arab countries with which it has normalized relations [met in the United Arab Emirates](#) for a multilateral meeting
- On October 13th, US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken [hosted](#) a trilateral summit in Washington with UAE Foreign Minister HH Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed and Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid where the three discussed advancing the Abraham Accords.
- On October 19th, Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett [received](#) UAE Ambassador Mohamed Al Khaja and Bahraini Ambassador Khaled Al Jalahma where Ambassador Al Khaja presented Prime Minister Bennett with an invitation from HH Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, for an official visit to the UAE.
- On November 15th, the first Israeli ambassador to the UAE Amir Hayek [presented his credentials](#) to Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum.
- On November 21st, HM Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince and PM of Bahrain, [met with](#) Israeli Prime Minister Bennet on the sidelines of COP26 in Glasgow.
- In November 2021, Israel Defense Minister Benny Gantz visited Morocco and [signed a landmark security agreement](#).
- On December 8th, the Abraham Accords Peace Institute (AAPI) [convened its inaugural “Trade and Investment Forum”](#) in Abu Dhabi, accelerating economic and business ties between the Abraham Accords countries.
- On December 9th Israel’s Foreign Minister Yair Lapid [met with](#) Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi at the El-Thadiya Palace in Cairo where they discussed strengthening the peace between the two countries in spheres such as economics, energy, agriculture, and trade.
- On December 13th, Israel Prime Minister Naftali Bennett became the first Israeli Prime Minister in history to make an [official visit to the United Arab Emirates](#), where he met with Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed
- On December 16th, Bahraini Ambassador to Israel HE Khaled Al Jalahma [hosted](#) the first ever Bahraini National Day celebration in Israel.

- On December 22nd, Israel and Morocco celebrated the one-year anniversary of their normalization agreement, receiving many diplomatic congratulations, including [from the United States](#)
- On December 28th, the first Israeli ambassador to Bahrain Eitan Na'eh [presented his credentials](#) to King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa ([having arrived in Bahrain in November](#)).

## TRADE AND INVESTMENT

The Abraham Accords will lead to tremendous economic opportunities, which will increase prosperity and quality of life in the participating countries. As commercial ties grow, so will the strength of the bonds between the countries and their people. In spite of the Covid-19 Global pandemic, significant strides were made in the trade relations between Israel and Abraham Accords countries, with major commercial activity leading to massive increases in trade.

### Trade Numbers:<sup>1</sup>

- \$1.15 Billion in trade between Israel and UAE in 2021 (511% increase from 2020)
- \$6.5 Million in trade between Israel and Bahrain in 2021 (up from 0 in 2020)
- \$41.6 Million in trade between Israel and Morocco in 2021 (84% increase from 2020)
- \$246.1 Million in trade between Israel and Egypt in 2021 (43% increase from 2020)
- \$455.8 Million in trade between Israel and Jordan in 2021 (83% increase from 2020)

### Noteworthy Trade and Investment Deals:

- On January 17th, the National Bank of Bahrain [signed agreements](#) to strengthen banking cooperation with Israel's Bank Leumi and Bank Hapoalim.
- In February 2021, Israeli Orange Blossom Ventures (OBV) investment boutique [signed a cooperation agreement](#) with the Emirati Hamdan AlShamsi (HAS) law firm to locate, initiate, and progress mutual investments in relevant technological sectors.
- In March 2021, the UAE [established a \\$10 billion](#) fund aimed at investing in specific sectors in Israel.
- In March 2021, Bahrain Electricity and Water Authority [signed an agreement](#) with Mekorot National Water Company. In September, Bahrain's Electricity and Water Authority [signed an agreement](#) with Israel's Ministry of Water Resources to cooperate on innovation and development of water resources.

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<sup>1</sup> Israel Central Bureau of Statistics  
([https://www.cbs.gov.il/he/mediarelease/doclib/2021/427/16\\_21\\_427t1.pdf](https://www.cbs.gov.il/he/mediarelease/doclib/2021/427/16_21_427t1.pdf))

- In March 2021, Morocco's Employers' Union (Confédération Générale des Entreprises du Maroc/CGEM) and the Israeli Employers and Business Organizations (IEBO) [signed a strategic partnership](#) to strengthen dialogue and contacts between the two countries' business communities in import & export, research & development, innovation and technology.
- In March 2021, the Dubai Investment Development Agency (Dubai FDI), signed an agreement with the Manufacturers' Association of Israel to explore collaboration in promoting cross-border business and investment opportunities.
- In March 2021, the UAE's EDGE Group and Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) [signed an MOU](#) to develop an advanced C-UAS (Counter- Unmanned Aircraft System) tailored to the UAE market
- On April 2nd, the General Confederation of Moroccan Enterprises (CGEM) signed an agreement with Israeli technology company IBEO.
- In April 2021, Abu Dhabi's G42 and Israel's Rafael Advanced Defense Systems [formed a joint venture](#) to commercialize AI and big data technologies.
- In May 31st, the UAE and Israel [signed a tax treaty](#) to avoid double taxation that will help promote bilateral trade and investment.
- On June 30th, the foreign ministers of the UAE and Israel [signed an agreement](#) on economic and trade cooperation to foster economic ties.
- In July 2021, it was announced that the [UAE will cooperate with Israel's Start-Up Nation](#) Central to promote Agrifood-Tech innovation and startups.
- In August 2021, Israel Aerospace Industries (IAEI) [signed an agreement](#) with Etihad Engineering to establish a facility in Abu Dhabi that will convert Boeing passenger planes into cargo aircraft. In November 2021, IAI [signed an agreement](#) with Emirates Airlines to convert passenger planes into cargo planes.
- On September 2nd, Israel's Delek Drilling [finalized a deal](#) to sell its 22% stake in the Tamar Gas field to UAE's Mubadala Petroleum.
- On October 12th, Israel [signed a deal](#) agreeing to double the amount of freshwater it supplies to Jordan.
- In November 2021, Israeli defense firm Elbit systems [launched a UAE venture](#), seeking to foster "long-term cooperation" with the UAE.
- On November 16th, Israel and the [UAE officially launched talks](#) on a Free Trade Agreement.
- In November 2021, Israel, the UAE, and Jordan [signed an agreement](#) to build a desalination plant to provide water to Jordan.
- In November 2021, Israeli company SolconIGEL and UAE's CMETS Engineering Solutions [signed a distribution agreement](#) whereby CMETS will stock, sell, and service SolconIGEL's soft starters in Abu Dhabi.

- In November 2021, the UAE's Edge Group and Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) [agreed](#) to work together to design and build unmanned surface vehicles and to set up a joint maintenance center in the UAE that will maintain and market IAI's electro-optic arrays.
- In November 2021, Israeli VC OurCrowd [began to operate out of the UAE](#), becoming the first Israeli VC to do so.
- In November 2021, Israel and the UAE [signed an MOU](#) to deepen relations related to the energy sector and to launch a bilateral partnership that supports their clean energy goals.

## PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE

Increased people-to-people development builds stronger bonds between countries, and the Abraham Accords presents an incredible opportunity to engender dialogue aimed at new understanding. In spite of the challenges presented by the Covid-19 global pandemic, tremendous strides were made in 2021 in broadening and deepening the people-to-people ties between Abraham Accords member nations, with numerous initiatives launched and historic delegations received.

### Noteworthy Agreements:

- On January 11th, Israel's Bar-Ilan University [signed an agreement](#) with the UAE's Gulf Medical University to promote medical research and improve public health throughout the Middle East
- In early February 2021, the UAE's Al Ain Football Club and Israel's Maccabi Haifa [signed an agreement of cooperation](#) and agreed to play friendly matches.
- On February 2nd, Zulekha Hospital in the UAE and Israel-based Health Plus [signed an agreement](#) to cooperate in the field of medical tourism
- On April 2nd, the National School of Business and Management in Casablanca and Tel Aviv University's School of Management signed an agreement for cooperation on enhancing education and job opportunities for Israeli and Moroccan students.
- On April 30th, the National Archives of the UAE and National Library of Israel [signed an MOU](#) committing "the two organizations to work together in support of mutual and separate goals and for the benefit of the international cultural and documentary heritage sector."
- In July 2021, the Department of Health-Abu Dhabi [signed MOU's](#) on healthcare cooperation with Israel's Sheba Medical Center and Clalit Health services.
- In July 2021, Dubai-based SJM Group and Israeli medtech startup INMED [agreed to partner](#) on creating a digital health platform for remote patient management in Dubai.
- On August 10th, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Morocco's Mohammed VI Polytechnic University [signed an MOU](#) to promote academic collaborations between the

two universities—from student and academic staff exchanges to joint research and collaborative degrees.

- On August 11th, the foreign ministers of Israel and Morocco [signed a Memorandum of Understanding](#) in the fields of culture, youth, and sports.
- On September 20th, Ben Gurion University (BGU) of the Negev [signed an MOU](#) with Morocco's Universite Internationale de Rabat to collaborate on the study of Moroccan Jewry, in addition to research and education. This followed a similar MOU BGU signed with Morocco's Mohammed VI Polytechnic University earlier in the year.
- On September 30th, the government of Bahrain and Israel [signed an MOU on Cooperation in the Field of Sports](#).
- In November 2021, Sheba Hospital in Israel [signed a first of its kind agreement](#) with Salmaniya Medical Complex and King Hamad University Hospital of Bahrain strengthening cooperation and allow the institutions to learn from each other.
- On November 9th, the Dahan Center for Culture, Society, and Education in the Sephardic Heritage at Bar-Ilan University and the Center for Studies and Research on Hebraic Law in Essouira Morocco [signed an MOU](#) on wide-ranging cooperation.
- In November 2021, UAE's Zayed University and Israel's University of Haifa [signed an MOU](#) agreeing to exchange knowledge, conduct joint-research projects, and organize events.
- On November 18th, the UAE and Israel [signed an Memorandum of Understanding](#) in educational affairs, which covers general, higher, technical and vocational education.
- On December 8th, The Abraham Accords Peace Institute (AAPI) [signed an MoU](#) with Sharaka, to enhance cooperation between the two organizations in areas such as student exchanges, youth delegations, cultural events, interfaith dialogues, and activities in the fields of music, arts, sports and the environment.

#### People-to-People Initiatives:

- In September, daughters from the UAE and Israel [saved lives in a kidney exchange](#)
- In September, the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra [performed in Dubai](#) for the first time.
- On October 2nd, [Israel inaugurated its pavilion](#) at Expo 2020 Dubai. On November 15th, the first official interfaith delegation from Israel to the UAE [attended an event at Expo 2020](#) to mark the start of Tolerance week.
- In October 2021, UAE's Khalifa Empowerment Program (known as Aqdar) [launched a program](#) with the Israeli Emirates Leadership Program (ILEP) on leadership workshops
- In October 2021, a delegation of influencers from Bahrain [were brought to Israel](#) by NGO Sharaka.
- On October 30th, an orthodox Israeli singer performed [at the Dubai Fashion Festival](#), and another Israeli won first place for best bridal designer.

- In November 2021, an eleven-person delegation of Moroccan Muslim scholars of Jewish Law [co-hosted a conference](#) on Moroccan Jewish culture and law in Israel. In November 2021, a UNESCO cultural initiative, aimed at countering Holocaust denial, [was received by leaders of the UAE and Bahrain](#).
- In November, Emirati and Israeli artists [collaborated to create an exhibition](#) in Jerusalem featuring calligraphy in Hebrew and Arabic.
- On December 8th, teens from Israeli and Emirati teens were [brought together in Dubai](#) by PICO Kids for a Make-a-thon to consider solutions to water scarcity.



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