



# Final Report

Muslim Trade Forum UK (MTF) Delegation to  
the 2<sup>nd</sup> Makkah Halal Forum, Saudi Arabia

منتدى مكة للحلال  
MAKKAH HALAL FORUM



25<sup>th</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2025

MAKKAH - SAUDI ARABIA



# Table of Content

1. Note of Thanks from the Chairman - Muslim Trade Forum UK
2. About MTF
3. Steering Committee
4. About Makkah Halal Forum
5. Executive Summary
6. Introduction
7. Delegation Overview and Members
8. Schedule and Activities of the Delegation
9. Detailed Meeting Reports
  - Meeting with Islamic Development Bank (IsDB)
  - Meeting with British Consul General in Jeddah
  - Meeting with Uzbekistan Delegation
  - Introductory Meeting with H.E Mr. Yousef Khalawi
  - Panel Discussion: Fostering Halal Economic Sustainability
  - Panel Discussion: Empowering Women through Halal Business
  - Meeting with Azerbaijan, Nigeria, and Bosnia & Herzegovin Delegations
  - Visit to Azerbaijan Pavilion
  - Meeting with Saudi Ministry of Investment (Food & Agri Division)
  - Meeting with H.E Dr. Majid bin Abdullah Al-Qasabi
  - Gala Dinner
  - Meeting with Mr. Ihsan Ovut
10. Key Achievements and Outcomes

# Message from Chair

**O**n behalf of the Muslim Trade Forum UK (MTF), I express my profound appreciation to everyone who contributed to the monumental success of our official delegation to the 2nd Makkah Halal Forum. This journey marked an unprecedented chapter in our efforts to promote the UK's engagement with the global halal economy, and it is only fitting to acknowledge the outstanding individuals and partners who made it possible.

I am especially grateful to our British delegation members who represented our business community with integrity, innovation, and influence. Your participation in high-level meetings and dynamic exchanges helped elevate the voice of British Muslims on a truly international platform.

We extend our deepest thanks to our gracious hosts and friends in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The welcome we received from distinguished figures such as Sheikh Safar Ruddah A Al Harthi, Sheikh Hussain Ibrahim M Al Nahhas, and Mr. Abdullah Zein was truly humbling. Their steadfast support ensured our mission was both meaningful and impactful.

*With gratitude & best regards,*

**Sir Iqbal Sacranie OBE**

*Chairman – Muslim Trade Forum UK*

A special word of appreciation goes to H.E. Sheikh Yousef Hassan Khalawi of the Islamic Chamber of Commerce & Development, whose forward-thinking leadership and collaborative spirit have paved the way for greater UK-OIC economic integration through initiatives like the London Halal Forum and British National Week.

As we reflect on this milestone, I am filled with optimism for what lies ahead. The delegation's achievements reaffirm our belief that the British Muslim business community holds great promise in shaping global trade dialogues. I look forward to our continued journey together.





## About MTF

---

**T**he **Muslim Trade Forum (MTF)** is a pioneering organization established in the United Kingdom with a mission to champion the **economic empowerment** of the British Muslim business community, while fostering unity and collaboration among Muslim entrepreneurs, professionals, and thought leaders across the country.

Rooted in the core objective of bring people together through economic upliftment, MTF is committed to building a strong, inclusive, and globally connected business platform that not only addresses the unique challenges faced by Muslim businesses in the UK but also unlocks meaningful opportunities for international growth and innovation.

MTF seeks to connect British Muslim entrepreneurs with the **57 member countries of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)**, leveraging shared values, cultural ties, and mutual economic interests. The Forum places a strong emphasis on **international trade and investment**, supporting members through trade delegations, exhibitions, business forums, and strategic partnerships that enable access to emerging global markets.

In its ongoing efforts, MTF also prioritizes the **empowerment of women and youth entrepreneurs** by providing access to mentorship, training, and leadership

development programs – fostering a new generation of innovators and change-makers who will shape the future of the UK economy.

With a clear vision for the future, **MTF is now transitioning into the British Muslim Chamber of Commerce & Industry (BMCCI)** – a permanent and dynamic institution that will serve as a central platform to enhance trade, investment, and networking opportunities between the United Kingdom and the OIC countries. BMCCI will play a pivotal role in fostering bilateral and multilateral economic collaboration and strengthening ties across key sectors and regions within the OIC landscape.

We are currently in the advanced stages of this transformation, including registration, governance structuring, and the development of institutional partnerships, as we lay the foundation for a chamber that will serve the British Muslim business community for generations to come.

Together, through collaboration, innovation, and shared purpose, **Muslim Trade Forum** aspires to build a **legacy of empowerment, connectivity, and inclusive prosperity** – elevating the voice and impact of Muslim businesses across the UK and the wider OIC region.

# *Meet the* **Steering Committee**

---



***Sir Iqbal Sacranie OBE***

Chairman

+44 7860 375 725  
raheena@glotex.co.uk



***Sher Khan***

Member

+44 7885 609 091  
s.khan@pipasolutions.com



***Saleem Sheikh***

Member

+44 7976 728 488  
srsheikh@gscsolicitors.com



***Mohammed Saqub***

Member

+44 7800 953 699  
mohammed.saqub@shma.co.uk



***Mohamad Ali Harrath***

Member

+44 7980 646 489  
mohamed.ali@islamchannel.tv



***Abdullah Zein***

Member

+44 7830 072 470  
abdullah@ayahotels.uk

# Meet the Steering Committee

---



***Shazid Miah***

Member

+44 7889 280 027  
shazid.m@gmail.com



***Azeem Akhtar***

Member

+44 7415 130 957  
mafakhtar@gmail.com



***Sofia Syed***

Member

+44 7902 345 007  
sofia.syed@meum.group



***Deena Ataie***

Member

+44 7432 132 909  
deena@heriots.co.uk



***Dr. Iqbal Thaheem***

Member

+44 7780 823 899  
iqbal.thaheem@mcglobal.org



***Mahmood Ahmed***

Secretary

+44 7957 589 350  
secretary@muslimtradeforum.org.uk

*About*

# Makkah Halal Forum

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Makkah Halal Forum (MHF) is a premier international event focused on the rapidly expanding global Halal economy, which took place in the holy city of Makkah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, from 25<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> February 2025. Organized to highlight opportunities and challenges in the Halal sector, the forum serves as a comprehensive platform for businesses, policy makers, and stakeholders to engage, collaborate, and drive growth in this vital industry.

## Event Highlights:

### Exhibition

The three-day exhibition featured participants from around the world, showcasing a diverse range of products and services across various sectors of the Halal economy, including food and beverages, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, tourism, logistics, and financial services. The British Pavilion, organized by the Muslim Trade Forum (MTF), marked the first-time participation of UK businesses, with 15 booths exclusively dedicated to British companies.

### Other Events

Business  
Conferences

Panel  
Discussions

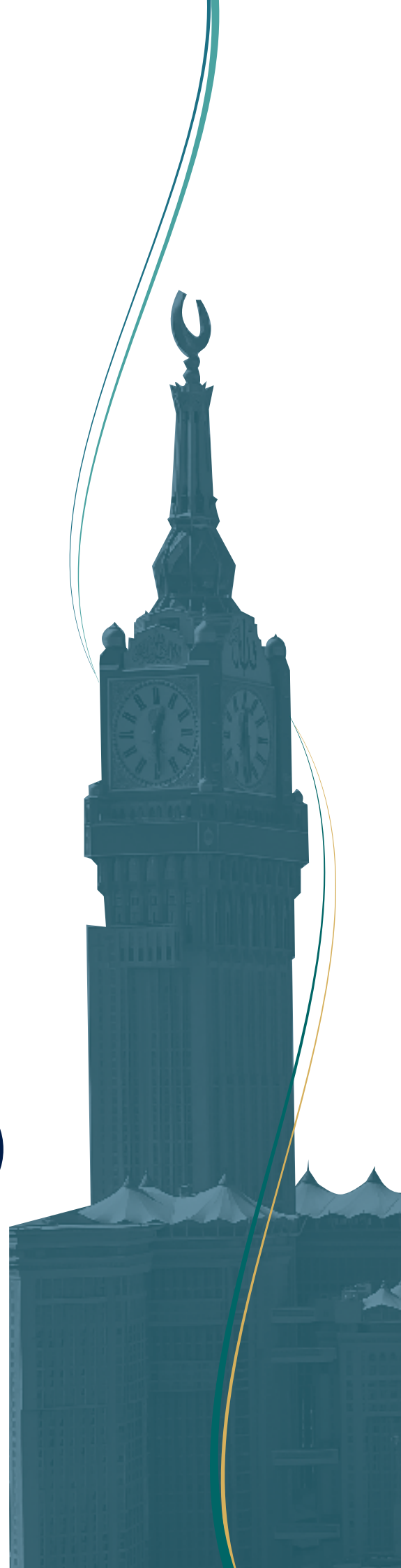
Sector  
Specific

B2B  
Meetings

Culinary  
Arts Show

Food  
Festival

Ziyarah  
Visits



# Executive Summary

The Muslim Trade Forum UK (MTF) successfully coordinated a landmark delegation of British Muslim business leaders to the Makkah Halal Forum held in Saudi Arabia from 22nd to 27th February 2025. This strategic engagement was envisioned as a foundational step toward launching the British Muslim Chamber of Commerce & Industry (BMCCI), which aspires to serve as a central body for promoting halal trade and investment between the UK and the Islamic world.

Throughout the visit, delegates engaged in dialogue with influential stakeholders, including global financial institutions, key Saudi ministries, and diplomatic officials. Notably, discussions with the Islamic Development Bank, the Saudi Ministry of Investment, and the British Consulate in Jeddah fostered critical momentum toward developing institutional partnerships and commercial linkages.

The delegation's participation extended beyond formal meetings. Members contributed meaningfully to global panels focusing on Halal sector innovation, ethical standards, and inclusive economic development. Exchanges with delegations from Central Asia, Africa, and the Balkans enabled rich bilateral dialogue that underscored the growing influence of the UK in the Halal economy.

This mission helped establish credibility for the British Muslim business sector on the world stage. The visit's outcomes have laid the groundwork for structured collaborations, positioning BMCCI as a future driver of sustainable halal commerce.



2<sup>nd</sup> Makkah Halal Forum was held at the prestigious Makkah Chamber Exhibitions and Events Center | Makkah Chamber at Makkah – Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

# Introduction

---

In February 2025, the Muslim Trade Forum UK (MTF) organised the official British delegation to participate in the Makkah Halal Forum—an influential international gathering of thought leaders, policymakers, and entrepreneurs in the Halal economy. This marked the first-ever appearance by a British delegation at the Forum, signifying an important leap forward in international outreach and engagement for the UK's Muslim business community.

Led by Sir Iqbal Sacranie OBE, the delegation included a cross-section of British Muslim entrepreneurs and professionals spanning key industries. Their participation reflected the growing aspiration to deepen the UK's footprint in global halal markets and expand economic ties with member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

The forum served as a key avenue for the MTF to initiate dialogue around the forthcoming British Muslim Chamber of Commerce & Industry (BMCCI). Through meaningful discussions, formal sessions, and side meetings with ministries, international chambers, and private sector leaders, the delegation championed the UK's intent to become a central player in shaping the future of Halal trade, investment, and policy alignment.

In essence, the delegation's presence at the Makkah Halal Forum was not just symbolic—it was a strategic milestone toward building a lasting institutional framework that fosters commercial cooperation, encourages entrepreneurship, and champions British Muslim business excellence on a global stage.



The British Delegation having an exclusive meeting with H.E Dr. Majid Bin Abdullah Al-Qasabi - Minister of Commerce of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

# Delegation

## Overview and Members

The delegation included senior representatives from the **Halal food industry**, **Islamic finance sector**, and **trade policy** organisations.

*Sir Iqbal Sacranie OBE*  
*Head of Delegation*

*Saleem Sheikh*

*Mohamad Ali Harrath*

*Sher Khan*

*Ashraf Omar*

*Abdullah Zein*

*Sofia Syed*

*Deena Ataie*

*Iftah Nawaz*

# *Delegation*

## Overview and Members

---

*Muhammad Sacranie*

*Diana Alhamade*

*Syed Yasir Hassan*

*Dr. Ayshan Abdullah*

*Arshad Salam*

*Abdullah Qureshi*

*Enver Cebi*

*Ferial Saleem Sheikh*

*Ufuk Seçgin*

*Mohamed Zein*

*Mahmood Ahmed*  
*Coordinator*

# *Schedule and Activities* of the Delegation

---

Date	Activity	Location
22 <sup>nd</sup> Feb 2025	Arrival in Jeddah	Jeddah
22 <sup>nd</sup> Feb 2025	Visit to Makkah for Umrah	Makkah
23 <sup>rd</sup> Feb 2025	Visit to Madinah	Madinah
24 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2025	Meeting with Islamic Development Bank	Jeddah
24 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2025	Meeting with British Consul General	Jeddah
25 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2025	1 <sup>st</sup> Day of Makkah Halal Forum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting with Uzbekistan Delegation</li> <li>• Panel Discussion – Halal Economic Sustainability</li> <li>• Panel Discussion – Women in Halal Business</li> <li>• Introductory Meeting with H.E Mr. Yousef Khalawi Secretary General, Islamic Chamber of Commerce &amp; Development (ICCD)</li> </ul>	Makkah
26 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2025	2 <sup>nd</sup> Day of Makkah Halal Forum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting with Nigerian Delegation</li> <li>• Meeting with Bosnian Delegation</li> <li>• Meeting with Azerbaijan Delegation</li> <li>• Visit to Azerbaijan Pavilion</li> <li>• Meeting with Saudi Ministry of Investment</li> <li>• Meeting with Saudi Minister of Commerce</li> <li>• Gala Dinner</li> </ul>	Makkah
27 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2025	Concluding Meeting with H.E Mr. Yousef Khalawi – Secretary General, Islamic Chamber of Commerce & Development (ICCD)	Makkah

# Detailed Meeting Reports

---

## Day 1

**Saturday, 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2025**

**Arrival in Saudi Arabia & Umrah in Makkah**

- The delegation arrived in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia in the afternoon.
- Upon arrival, they were warmly received and transferred to Makkah for Umrah.
- The Umrah pilgrimage was performed collectively by the delegation.
- After Umrah, the delegation was hosted for dinner by Sheikh Safar Ruddah A Al Harthi at his residence.
- Late at night, the delegation returned to Jeddah for their stay.



*The British Delegation performing Umrah in Makkah prior to the 2nd Makkah Halal Forum accompanied by Sheikh Safar Ruddah A Al Harthi*

# Day 2

Sunday, 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2025

Visit to Madinah

The delegation traveled to Madinah early in the morning.

## Key activities in Madinah included:

- Visit to Al Masjid an-Nabawi – Offering prayers at the Holy Prophet’s Mosque.
- Entry to the Rawdah – A significant and spiritual moment for all delegates.
- Visit to Al Saffiyah Museum – Learning about Islamic heritage.
- The delegation’s visit was coordinated by Mr. Ashraf Omar and Sheikh Hussain Ibrahim M Al Nahhas.
- In the evening, the delegation returned to Jeddah.



*Members of British Delegation during their visit to The Prophet’s Mosque in Madinah and meeting with a Senior scholar.*

# Day 3

**Monday, 24<sup>th</sup> February 2025**

**Official Meetings in Jeddah**

## **Meeting 1: Meeting with Islamic Development Bank (IsDB)**

- Hosted at IsDB headquarters in Jeddah.
- Delegation welcomed by Dr. Sami Al Suwailem – Acting Director General, IsDB.

### **Objective:**

To discuss investment opportunities, Islamic finance solutions, and UK participation in IsDB-backed Halal trade initiatives.

### **Key Discussion Points:**

#### **IsDB's Role in Global Halal Trade**

- IsDB provided an overview of its initiatives to support Halal industry expansion through investment and trade facilitation.
- The delegation explored funding opportunities for UK-based Halal businesses under IsDB programs.

#### **Islamic Finance Solutions for SMEs**

- Discussion focused on Shariah-compliant financial instruments, such as Murabaha and Sukuk, to support UK Halal businesses' growth.

#### **Future Collaboration**

- Agreement to explore joint projects in Halal food production, logistics, and certification standardization.
- IsDB invited MTF to participate in future IsDB trade initiatives.

### **Outcome:**

- MTF to work with IsDB on financial solutions for Halal SMEs.
- Agreement to explore UK participation in IsDB-backed Halal supply chain projects.



*The British Delegation presenting Memento to Dr. Sami Al-Suwailem – Director General, Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) at IsDB Headquarters in Jeddah – Saudi Arabia.*



*Group Photograph of British Delegation with Dr. Sami Al-Suwailem – Director General, Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) at IsDB Headquarters in Jeddah – Saudi Arabia.*



*Sir Iqbal Sacranie OBE – Chairman MTF meeting with Dr. Sami Al-Suwailem – Director General, Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) at IsDB Headquarters in Jeddah – Saudi Arabia.*

## **Meeting 2: Meeting with British Consul General in Jeddah**

- Delegation met Ms. Cecille Elbeleidi – British Consul General in Jeddah at the British Consulate General in Jeddah.

### **Objective:**

To discuss the current state of UK-Saudi trade relations, opportunities for British businesses in the Halal sector, and strengthening bilateral trade and investment ties between the UK and Saudi Arabia.

### **Key Discussion Points:**

#### **UK-Saudi Trade Relations and Halal Industry Growth**

- The British Consul General provided insights into the growing demand for UK-based Halal products in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf region.
- Discussion on expanding UK exports of Halal food, pharmaceuticals, and cosmetics to Saudi Arabia.
- Emphasis on the role of Saudi Vision 2030 in creating a business-friendly environment for foreign investment, particularly in the Halal economy.

#### **British Muslim Chamber of Commerce & Industry (BMCCI) Establishment**

- Introduction of BMCCI as a platform to enhance trade and economic ties between the UK and Muslim-majority countries.
- The British Consul General expressed support for the initiative and recommended engagement with UK Department for Business and Trade (DBT) for further facilitation.

#### **Opportunities for UK Businesses at Future Saudi Trade Forums**

- Discussion on UK participation in upcoming Saudi trade exhibitions and investment summits.
- Encouragement for British Halal businesses to establish partnerships with Saudi investors.

### **Outcome:**

- UK Embassy to facilitate British businesses in entering the Saudi Halal market.
- Until the establishment of BMCCI, MTF to collaborate with UK Department for Business and Trade (DBT) for structured UK-Saudi trade engagement.
- Consulate staff assisted individual delegates with trade inquiries.



*Sir Iqbal Sacranie OBE – Chairman MTF along with members of the British Delegation presenting a token of appreciation to H.E Cecille Elbeledi – British Consul General at Jeddah during the visit of the Delegation to British Consulate General in Jeddah on the sidelines of 2nd Makkah Halal Forum*

# Day 4

Tuesday, 25<sup>th</sup> February 2025

Day 1 of Makkah Halal Forum

## Meeting with Delegation from Uzbekistan

- Led by Mr. Kurbanov Davron Kadambayevich – Deputy Chairman, Chamber of Commerce & Industry of Uzbekistan.

### Objective:

To explore bilateral Halal trade opportunities between the UK and Uzbekistan and discuss potential joint ventures in Halal food production, certification, and supply chain management.

### Key Discussion Points:

#### Uzbekistan's Emerging Halal Industry

- The Uzbek delegation provided insights into the rapid expansion of the Halal industry in Uzbekistan, highlighting the government's support for Halal certification and exports.
- Interest in UK expertise in Halal certification and food safety standards.

#### Potential Trade and Investment Areas

- Discussion focused on Shariah-compliant financial instruments, such as Murabaha and Sukuk, to support UK Halal businesses' growth.

#### Collaboration on Halal Certification Standards

- Discussion on aligning Halal certification standards to facilitate easier market access for UK and Uzbek businesses.

### Outcome:

- MTF to explore UK-Uzbekistan trade partnerships in Halal food and agriculture.
- Agreement to organise a UK-Uzbekistan business forum focused on Halal trade.



*Delegations from United Kingdom and Uzbekistan having an interactive meeting during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Makkah Halal Forum*



*Delegations from United Kingdom and Uzbekistan having an interactive meeting during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Makkah Halal Forum*



*Group Photograph of British Delegation with Delegation from Republic of Uzbekistan. The British Delegation was led by Sir Iqbal Sacranie OBE – Chairman MTF and the Uzbek Delegation was led by Mr. Kurbanov Davron Kadambayevich – Deputy Chairman, Chamber of Commerce & Industry of Uzbekistan*

## **Introductory Meeting with H.E Sheikh Yousef Khalawi, Secretary General – ICCD**

### **Objective:**

To establish an initial working relationship between MTF and the Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry & Development (ICCD) and explore areas of mutual collaboration in promoting Halal trade and investment.

### **Key Discussion Points:**

#### **Overview of ICCD's Role in Global Trade**

- ICCD aims to facilitate Halal trade and investment between OIC member states and global partners.

#### **Introduction of Muslim Trade Forum UK (MTF) and BMCCI**

- MTF delegation introduced BMCCI and its strategic vision to connect UK-based Muslim businesses with the global Halal economy.

#### **Potential Areas of Collaboration**

- ICCD invited MTF (until it becomes BMCCI) to join its international trade initiatives.
- Proposal for joint training programs on Halal business development and certification awareness.

### **Outcome:**

- BMCCI/MTF to become an official member of ICCD's trade facilitation programs.
- Future meetings planned for strategic partnership development.



*The British Delegation having an exclusive meeting with H.E Mr. Yousef Khalawi – Secretary General, Islamic Chamber of Commerce & Development (ICCD) on the sidelines of 2nd Makkah Halal Forum in Makkah – Saudi Arabia*



*Sir Iqbal Sacranie OBE – Chairman, MTF briefing H.E Mr. Yousef Khalawi – Secretary General ICCD during an exclusive meeting on the sidelines of 2<sup>nd</sup> Makkah Halal Forum. Also seen are Mr. Saleem Sheikh, Mr. Mohamed Ali Harrath, Mr. Ashraf Omar and Mr. Yasir Hassan*



*The British Delegation having an exclusive meeting with H.E Mr. Yousef Khalawi – Secretary General, Islamic Chamber of Commerce & Development (ICCD) on the sidelines of 2<sup>nd</sup> Makkah Halal Forum in Makkah – Saudi Arabia*



*Sir Iqbal Sacranie OBE – Chairman MTF along with members of the British Delegation presenting a Memento to H.E Mr. Yousef Khalawi – Secretary General ICCD during the visit to 2<sup>nd</sup> Makkah Halal Forum*

## **Panel Discussion: Fostering Halal Economic Sustainability**

### **Moderated by:**

- Dr. Wael Eldesouki Bedda (Secretary General of Saleh Kamel Sustainable Entrepreneurship & Enterprise Development Organisation (SKSEED))

### **Panelists**

- Sir Iqbal Sacranie OBE (Chairman – Muslim Trade Forum UK)
- H.E Mr. Dino Selimovic (Advisor to Foreign Minister, Bosnia & Herzegovina)
- Mr. Nazeem Noordali (CEO, Islamic Trade Finance Corporation)
- Mr. Tomas Guerrero Blanco (Director, Halal Trade)

### **Objective:**

- To highlight strategies for long-term economic sustainability in the Halal industry, focusing on supply chain efficiency, investment, and digital transformation.

### **Key Discussion Points:**

#### **Role of Digitalisation in Halal Trade**

- Use of blockchain technology for Halal traceability.
- E-commerce and digital payment solutions in Halal business.

#### **Investment in Halal Startups**

- Saudi government incentives for foreign Halal businesses.
- Shariah-compliant investment models for business growth.

#### **Sustainable Halal Certification Practices**

- Need for global standardization of Halal certification to ease trade barriers.

### **Key Discussion Points:**

- Over 1.9 billion Muslims worldwide represent a consumer market exceeding \$3 trillion.
- Muslim entrepreneurs are leading sectors such as finance, Halal food, pharmaceuticals, technology, and logistics.
- Collaboration between Muslim and non-Muslim business leaders is essential to create an inclusive and sustainable global economy.

### **Outcome:**

- MTF to explore collaboration on digital transformation projects for UK Halal businesses.



## **Panel Discussion: Empowering Women in Halal Business**

### **Moderated by:**

- Ms. Natavan Mammadova (ICCD Women's Economic Empowerment Lead). Her designated role within the ICCD demonstrates ICCD's commitment to supporting women in business.

### **Panelists**

- Ms. Deena Ataie (MTF UK Steering Committee, Owner of Heriots Patisserie, UK)
- Ms. Fayruz Mohamed (National 1st Deputy Chairperson of the South African National Zakah Fund SANZAF)
- Prof. Dr. Hj. Siti Nur Azizah (Chairperson of the Association of Indonesian Muslim Women Entrepreneurs PERSAMI)

### **Objective of the Panel:**

- To explore the critical role of women in the global Halal economy, identify challenges faced by women-led businesses, and discuss strategies for empowerment, financing, and global trade participation.

### **Key Discussion Points:**

#### **Women's Role in the Halal Economy**

- Deena Ataie emphasised that women entrepreneurs play a significant role in the growth of the Halal industry, particularly in Halal food, modest fashion, and ethical beauty sectors.
- She cited examples of women-led Halal brands in the UK making waves globally.

#### **Challenges Faced by Women in Halal Business**

*Panelists highlighted key barriers:*

- Limited access to financing for women-led Halal startups.
- Cultural and social restrictions in certain regions.
- Lack of structured mentorship programs for female Halal entrepreneurs.
- Regulatory challenges in exporting Halal products.

### **Key Takeaways & Commitments:**

- MTF UK will establish a "Women in Halal Business" Network to provide mentorship, access to funding, and global market opportunities.
- Saudi Women in Business Association invited MTF UK to co-host a UK-Saudi Women's Halal Trade Forum in 2026.
- South Africa & Indonesia expressed interest in forming a Women's Halal Trade Alliance with the UK.
- MTF UK pledged to take a leadership role in connecting British female entrepreneurs with Saudi, South African, and Indonesian markets.



*Ms. Deena Ataie – Managing Director, Heriots Patisserie receiving a memento from Ms. Natavan Mammadova – ICCD’s Women Economic Empowerment Lead for successfully participating in the Panel Discussion: Empowering Women through Halal Business during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Makkah Halal Forum. Ms. Deena represented MTF as a Panelist*



# Day 5

**Wednesday, 26<sup>th</sup> February 2025**

**Day 2 of Makkah Halal Forum**

## **Meetings with Nigerian, Bosnian and Azerbaijan Delegations**

- Azerbaijan Delegation (led by Mr. Mammad Musayev, President of National Entrepreneurs Confederation).
- Nigeria Delegation (led by Engr. Dr. Jani Ibrahim Mni, Deputy President, NACCIMA).
- Bosnia & Herzegovina Delegation (led by Mr. Dino Selimovic – Adviser to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia & Herzegovina).

### **Objective:**

To discuss expanding trade partnerships in the Halal sector between the UK and these countries.

### **Key Discussion Points:**

#### **Investment and Trade Opportunities**

- Azerbaijan's interest in Halal logistics and e-commerce.
- Nigeria's large Muslim consumer market and investment in Halal meat exports.
- Bosnia's growing Halal tourism sector.

### **Outcome:**

- Proposal for signing of MoU with National Entrepreneurs Confederation of Azerbaijan.
- Inviting a Trade Delegation from Nigeria.
- UK's participation at Halal forums in Bosnia & Herzegovina.



*British Delegation having an interactive meeting with the delegation to Azerbaijan. The British Delegation was organised by MTF and the Azerbaijan Delegation was organised by ASK*



*The British Delegation meeting with the Nigerian Delegation during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Makkah Halal Forum*



*British Delegation having an interactive meeting with the delegation to Azerbaijan. The British Delegation was organised by MTF and the Azerbaijan Delegation was organised by ASK*



*Interactive meeting between delegations from United Kingdom and Bosnia & Herzegovina. The British delegation was led by Sir Iqbal Sacranie OBE – Chairman MTF whereas the Bosnian delegation was led by Mr. Dino Selimovic – Adviser to Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina*



*Interactive meeting between delegations from United Kingdom and Bosnia & Herzegovina. The British delegation was led by Sir Iqbal Sacranie OBE – Chairman MTF whereas the Bosnian delegation was led by Mr. Dino Selimovic – Adviser to Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia & Herzegovina*



*British Delegation meeting with delegation from Bosnia & Herzegovina at 2<sup>nd</sup> Makkah Halal Forum*

## Visit to Azerbaijan Pavilion

### Objective:

- To explore Azerbaijan's role in the global Halal supply chain and discuss potential partnerships.

### Outcome:

- MTF to engage with Azerbaijani businesses for Halal food export agreements.



*British Delegation organised by Muslim Trade Forum (MTF) visiting booths at Azerbaijan Pavilion*



*British Delegation organised by Muslim Trade Forum (MTF) visiting booths at Azerbaijan Pavilion*

## **Meeting with Saudi Ministry of Investment**

The delegation met with Mr. Mohamed Alohalay – General Manager (Food & Agri Division) at Ministry of Investment, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

### **Objective of the Panel:**

- To explore the critical role of women in the global Halal economy, identify challenges faced by women-led businesses, and discuss strategies for empowerment, financing, and global trade participation.

### **Key Discussion Points:**

#### **Investment Incentives for UK Halal Businesses in Saudi Arabia**

Mr. Mohamed Alohalay outlined the Vision 2030 investment incentives for UK businesses, including:

- 100% foreign ownership for Halal businesses in food, pharmaceuticals, and cosmetics.
- Tax exemptions for the first five years for Halal startups.
- Fast-track business licensing for British investors in the Halal economy.

#### **UK's Potential Role in Saudi Arabia's Halal Market**

MTF UK delegation highlighted the following sectors where British companies could invest:

- Halal Food Processing & Packaging – Establishing UK-Saudi joint ventures in Halal-certified processed foods.
- Islamic Fintech & Halal Banking – Saudi Arabia welcomed UK Islamic banks to open branches in Riyadh & Jeddah.
- Halal Tourism & Hospitality – Opportunities for British companies in Muslim-friendly tourism services.

### **Key Outcomes & Agreements:**

- Saudi Arabia invited British investors to the 2025 Riyadh Halal Investment Summit.
- MTF UK will facilitate a UK-Saudi Halal Business Roundtable in London.
- British Halal SMEs will be given a “Fast-Track” entry into Saudi Arabia’s investment framework.



*The British Delegation meeting with Mr. Mohamed Alohalry – General Manager (Food & Agri Division) at Ministry of Investment, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*



*The British Delegation presenting a Memento to Mr. Mohamed Alohal - General Manager (Food & Agri Division) at Ministry of Investment of Saudi Arabia*



*The British Delegation meeting with Mr. Mohamed Alohal – General Manager (Food & Agri Division) at Ministry of Investment, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*

## **Meeting with H.E Dr. Majid bin Abdullah Al – Qasabi, The Honorable Minister of Commerce, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**

- The British delegation to Makkah Halal Forum led by Sir Iqbal Sacranie OBE – Chairman, MTF had an exclusive meeting with H.E Dr. Majid bin Abdullah Al – Qasabi, the Honorable Minister of Commerce for Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
- The British delegation was the only delegation among 29 countries granted an exclusive meeting

### **Objective:**

- To discuss the strengthening of UK-Saudi trade ties, with a focus on Halal exports, investment cooperation, and SME partnerships.

### **Key Discussion Points:**

#### **Investment Incentives for UK Halal Businesses in Saudi Arabia**

Mr. Mohamed Alohalay outlined the Vision 2030 investment incentives for UK businesses, including:

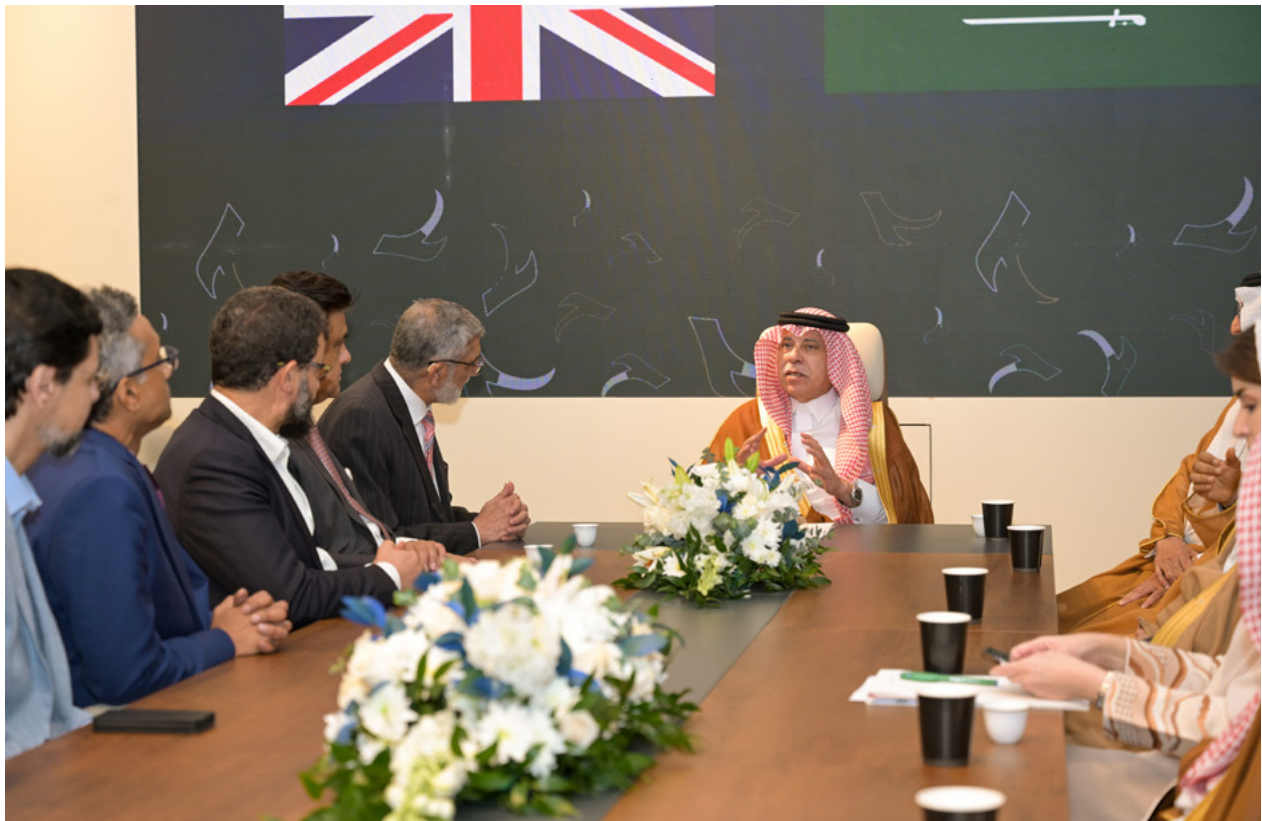
- UK-Saudi trade & investment relations.
- Strengthening the Halal business ecosystem.
- Strengthening UK-Saudi Trade Relations: Dr. Al-Qasabi emphasized Saudi Arabia's strategic interest in increasing Halal trade with the UK.
- UK-Saudi bilateral trade was valued at £16 billion in 2024, and Saudi Arabia aims to increase this to £20 billion by 2026.
- Saudi Arabia identified British expertise in Halal certification, Islamic finance, and Halal logistics as high-priority sectors.
- British Halal brands can benefit from Saudi Arabia's Free Economic Zones, particularly in Jeddah and Riyadh.

### **Objective:**

- To discuss UK-Saudi trade enhancement and policies for foreign investment in the Halal economy.

### **Outcome:**

- Minister expressed full support for UK businesses entering Saudi Halal markets.
- Potential preferential trade agreements to be explored.



*The British Delegation led by Sir Iqbal Sacranie OBE – Chairman MTF meeting with H.E Dr. Majid Bin Abdullah Al-Qasabi – Minister of Commerce, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Makkah Halal Forum.*





*The British Delegation led by Sir Iqbal Sacranie OBE – Chairman MTF meeting with H.E Dr. Majid Bin Abdullah Al-Qasabi – Minister of Commerce, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Makkah Halal Forum.*





*The British Delegation led by Sir Iqbal Sacranie OBE – Chairman MTF meeting with H.E Dr. Majid Bin Abdullah Al-Qasabi – Minister of Commerce, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Makkah Halal Forum.*

# Gala Dinner

---

**A**s part of the official program a grand Gala Dinner was hosted in Makkah, bringing together distinguished guests from across the globe, including international delegations, government officials, diplomats, senior business leaders, and key stakeholders from the halal industry. The evening was a celebration of the Forum's growing global impact and served as a dynamic platform for cultural exchange and international networking.

The Gala Dinner was graced by the presence of H.E. Dr. Majid bin Abdullah Al-Qasabi, Minister of Commerce of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, who delivered an insightful keynote address. In his speech, he emphasized Saudi Arabia's strategic vision to become a global hub for halal trade and underscored the significance of international cooperation in realizing the full potential of the halal economy.

Also addressing the audience was H.E. Sheikh Yousef Hassan Khalawi, Secretary General of the Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Development (ICCD), who highlighted the importance of uniting OIC member states and Muslim communities worldwide to create a more structured and collaborative global halal ecosystem. He applauded the presence of various international delegations, including those from the UK, Central Asia, Africa, and Southeast Asia, noting the role of the Forum in strengthening South-South cooperation.

The Gala Dinner also included speeches by senior representatives from the Saudi private sector, regional halal authorities, and heads of participating delegations, each echoing a common commitment to sustainable halal development, investment collaboration, and halal certification harmonization.

The atmosphere was one of elegance and cultural hospitality, reflecting the rich traditions of the Kingdom. Guests were welcomed with Arabic coffee and dates, and the evening featured live traditional music and a curated selection of Saudi and international halal cuisine. These cultural elements added warmth and depth to the evening, reinforcing the Forum's aim of bridging business with tradition and shared values.

The Gala provided a relaxed yet purposeful setting for networking among diverse delegations. Participants engaged in discussions on trade facilitation, market access, and joint initiatives. Many new connections were formed, with shared aspirations for future collaboration in areas such as halal finance, food production, tourism, logistics, and women-led entrepreneurship in the halal sector.

The evening concluded with an expression of gratitude from the organizers of the Makkah Halal Forum to all participants and dignitaries for their contributions to the Forum's success. The Gala Dinner not only celebrated the milestones of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Makkah Halal Forum but also reinforced the spirit of international cooperation and unity that defines the global halal movement.



*Sir Iqbal Sacranie OBE – Chairman MTF and Mr. Dino Selimovic – Adviser to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Makkah Halal Forum*



Group Photograph of British Delegation with Dr. Ahmad Kawesa Sengendo – Assistant Secretary General for Economic Affairs, Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)

# Day 6

Thursday, 27<sup>th</sup> February 2025

Day 3 of Makkah Halal Forum

## Meeting with Secretary General of SMIIIC – Mr. Ihsan Ovut

During the course of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Makkah Halal Forum, the British Delegation had the honor of meeting with **Mr. Ihsan Ovut**, Secretary General of the Standards and Metrology Institute for the Islamic Countries (SMIIC). The meeting provided a valuable opportunity to discuss the growing importance of harmonizing halal standards and certification processes across OIC member countries.

Mr. Ovut shared insights on the strategic objectives of SMIIC, emphasizing the need for international cooperation in developing unified halal standards to enhance trade, ensure consumer confidence, and promote quality assurance across borders. The British side expressed strong interest in exploring potential collaborations with SMIIC in areas of halal certification, capacity building, and technical alignment, especially in view of the UK's active halal market and its aspirations to deepen engagement with OIC economies. The exchange concluded on a positive note with both sides agreeing to remain in contact for future initiatives aimed at mutual benefit and standardization.



*The British Delegation having an exclusive meeting with Mr. Ihsan Ovut – Secretary General, Standards and Metrology Institute for the Islamic Countries (SMIIC). Representing MTF are Sir Iqbal Sacranie – Chairman MTF along with Mr. Abdullah Zein, Mr. Sher Khan, Ms. Deena Ataie, Dr. Ayshan Abdullah and Mr. Mohamad Zein.*

## Concluding Meeting with H.E Mr. Yousef Khalawi, Secretary General – ICCD

### Objective:

To discuss the strengthening of UK-Saudi trade ties, with a focus on Halal exports, investment cooperation, and SME partnerships.

- MTF to partner with ICCD in organizing the 1st London Halal Forum scheduled in London in November 2025.
- MTF to organize a designated British Pavilion at the 3rd Makkah Halal Forum scheduled in 2026.
- MTF to collaborate with UK Government to initiate the proceedings of British National Week which will comprise of several events mainly Exhibition, Workshops, Seminars, Conferences, Panel Discussions, etc. The first edition can be organised in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia followed by other editions in Jeddah – Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Dubai – United Arab Emirates and Doha – Qatar.

### Outcome:

- Sir Iqbal Sacranie OBE – Chairman MTF UK and Leader of the Delegation assured the Secretary General ICCD that MTF will partner with ICCD in all these events.



*The British delegation meeting with H.E Mr. Yousef Khalawi – Secretary General ICCD during 2<sup>nd</sup> Makkah Halal Forum | Makkah – Saudi Arabia*



*The British Delegation led by Sir Iqbal Sacranie OBE – Chairman MTF meeting with H.E Mr. Yousef Khalawi – Secretary General, ICCD. Also seen are Mr. Abdullah Zein, Mr. Sher Khan and Mr. Yasir Hassan.*

# Key Achievements and Outcomes

---

The participation of the Muslim Trade Forum UK (MTF) delegation at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Makkah Halal Forum was a highly successful endeavor, resulting in several significant achievements across multiple domains, including trade facilitation, investment opportunities, strategic collaborations, and policy dialogues. The delegation's engagement with government officials, business leaders, and trade organisations laid a strong foundation for long-term cooperation between the UK and OIC (Organization of Islamic Cooperation) member states in the Halal industry.

## **Strengthening UK's Position in the Global Halal Economy**

- One of the most crucial achievements of the forum was positioning the UK as a key player in the global Halal market. The discussions with the Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry & Development (ICCD), the Saudi Ministry of Investment, and the British Consul General in Jeddah highlighted the potential for UK-based Halal businesses to expand their footprint in the Middle East, Central Asia, and Africa.
- The Saudi Ministry of Investment confirmed that UK businesses are highly regarded in the Halal sector, particularly in food processing, pharmaceuticals, and cosmetics.
- MTF successfully advocated for preferential trade facilitation mechanisms for British Halal-certified businesses in Saudi Arabia.
- The ICCD extended an invitation for MTF to become an official partner in its international trade facilitation programs.

## **Establishing Direct Business and Investment Partnerships**

- During the B2B meetings and panel discussions, the delegation facilitated direct trade connections between UK companies and potential buyers, distributors, and investors from Saudi Arabia, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Nigeria, and Bosnia.
- Azerbaijan expressed strong interest in partnering with UK firms for Halal logistics and supply chain development.
- Nigeria sought collaborations in Halal-certified meat exports to the UK, given the country's vast livestock industry.
- Uzbekistan is keen to import British Halal-certified products and standardize its Halal certification system in alignment with the UK's rigorous food safety standards.
- Bosnia invited UK investors to explore Halal tourism and hospitality projects in the Balkan region.

## **Securing Institutional Collaborations**

One of the most promising outcomes was the establishment of institutional-level collaborations between MTF and:

- The British Consul General in Jeddah, who committed to supporting UK Halal businesses in Saudi Arabia.
- The Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry & Development (ICCD), which invited MTF and BMCCI to join its trade initiatives.
- The Saudi Minister of Commerce, who expressed his willingness to facilitate UK-Saudi Halal trade partnerships.
- These collaborations will pave the way for structured engagements, including joint trade missions, investment forums, and regulatory harmonization efforts.

## Exhibition at 2<sup>nd</sup> Makkah Halal Forum

As a key feature of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Makkah Halal Forum, an international exhibition was organized alongside the conference, showcasing the vast and evolving landscape of the global halal industry. The exhibition brought together a diverse range of companies and organizations from across the halal value chain, covering sectors such as halal-certified food and beverages, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, lifestyle products, logistics, and certification services. This dynamic platform not only reflected the growing global demand for halal products but also encouraged B2B networking, investment opportunities, and strategic partnerships among participating countries.

Exhibitors from a wide array of nations took part in the event, including **Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Azerbaijan, Türkiye, Malaysia, Brazil, Thailand,** and **South Africa**—each presenting their country's expertise and innovation in halal production and compliance. The United Kingdom was also prominently represented through **Al-Wadhiah**, a leading UK-based halal enterprise known for its commitment to Shariah-compliant standards in production and distribution.

The exhibition demonstrated the inclusive and expansive nature of the halal industry, underlining its relevance not only to Muslim consumers but also to global markets focused on ethical, safe, and traceable products. It served as a unique platform for dialogue, knowledge exchange, and cross-border collaboration, strengthening Makkah's emerging role as a central hub for the global halal economy.



*Al – Wadhiah representing the British Pavilion at 2<sup>nd</sup> Makkah Halal Forum Makkah – Saudi Arabia*

# Conclusion

---

The participation of the Muslim Trade Forum UK (MTF) delegation at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Makkah Halal Forum was a highly successful endeavor, resulting in several significant achievements across multiple domains, including trade facilitation, investment opportunities, strategic collaborations, and policy dialogues. The delegation's engagement with government officials, business leaders, and trade organisations laid a strong foundation for long-term cooperation between the UK and OIC (Organization of Islamic Cooperation) member states in the Halal industry.

## Key Takeaways:

- UK Halal businesses have significant untapped potential in the Middle Eastern, Central Asian, and African markets.
- Strategic alliances with Saudi Arabia, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Nigeria, and Bosnia can help UK firms expand their global footprint.
- The Saudi Minister of Commerce, who expressed his willingness to facilitate UK-Saudi Halal trade partnerships.
- These collaborations will pave the way for structured engagements, including joint trade missions, investment forums, and regulatory harmonization efforts.

The delegation's achievements have set the stage for long-term trade partnerships, but continued follow-ups, structured trade missions, and policy advocacy will be required to ensure that these discussions translate into real economic impact.

# Final Thoughts

---



The MTF delegation's participation at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Makkah Halal Forum was a transformative experience, laying the groundwork for stronger UK-Saudi economic ties and expanding Halal trade opportunities across multiple markets. Moving forward, structured trade missions, targeted investment forums, and continuous diplomatic engagement will be key in realizing the full potential of UK businesses in the Halal economy.

This report serves as a comprehensive roadmap for future trade and investment strategies and will be shared with government bodies, trade organizations, and private-sector stakeholders to ensure continued momentum and action-oriented outcomes.

## Contact us

---

**31 - 32 Ely Place  
London EC1N 6TD**

 +44 7957 589350 (Whatsapp)  
 [info@muslimtradeforum.org.uk](mailto:info@muslimtradeforum.org.uk)

 [muslimtradeforum.org.uk](https://muslimtradeforum.org.uk)

