



# e-Newsletter

HONORARY CONSULATE GENERAL OF SYRIA

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*"Syria, the cradle of civilization and the gateway to history."*

## American Bar Association Participating in a Conference in Syria



International Law Conference is taking place in Damascus July 6 – 8. The conference will discuss a broad range of legal issues, including money laundering, ethics, real estate and the rule of law. The conference is being organized by the British Syrian Society in association with the Law Society of England & Wales, and with the participation of the American Bar Association's Rule of Law Initiative. The keynote speaker from US is Federal Judge Rosmary Barkett who was Florida's first female chief justice of the state's Supreme Court. Federal Judge Barkett is of Syrian descent, both of her parents are from Zeydal (near Homs). She is a good friend of our consulate and we are proud of her accomplishment and her participation in the Damascus conference.

## Economic Ties between Damascus and Moscow Are Warming Up



Russia is looking to rebuild its status as a power in the Middle East. As a part of this process, one of its first ports of call was Syria, a logical choice given that it is ostracized by the other main international player in the region, the US. For its part, Syria is actively seeking both FDI (Foreign direct investment) and influential allies. It appears to have found both in Moscow. In early February, Russian construction firm Stroytransgaz commissioned the first stage of a 139km gas pipeline in Syria, part of a larger project running from the Jordanian border to the Al Rayan gas collecting station near the city of Homs. The company is also building a \$210m gas processing plant in Syria with a capacity of 2.5bn cubic metres and has commenced work on a second natural gas processing plant in the country's north. Russian oil major Tatneft is also active in Syria, having won the rights to explore and develop a 1900 square km field in the province of Deir ez-Zor, investing \$26m in the initial stage of the project. Russian firms are bidding on tenders to upgrade the rolling stock of the Syrian state railway, much of it Soviet-made, while Damascus is encouraging other companies to bid on contracts to improve the country's electricity network and port facilities. Russia is also starting to invest in the Syrian tourism industry, with the company Intourist-Sinara announcing in mid-June it would build a 900-bed four-star hotel complex on Syria's Mediterranean coast, with an opening date set for 2010. (source: Oxford Business Group)

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