

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: POLICY CONTINUITY EXPECTED UNDER THE NEW PRESIDENT



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Event

On 13 May, the UAE president and ruler of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed al-Nahyan, passed away at 73 years. Sheikh Khalifa served as president since 2004. However, after a stroke in 2014, he was rarely seen in public. Sheikh Khalifa's half-brother and Abu Dhabi's previous crown prince, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed al-Nahyan, had served as de facto ruler ever since. On Friday 14 May, Sheikh Mohammed was elected as the new president of the UAE by the Federal Supreme Council. It is the custom for the leader of Abu Dhabi to be elected as president.

Impact

The former president had been elected following the death of his father, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan al-Nahyan, the founding father of the United Arab Emirates and its first president ever. Sheikh Khalifa, considered by many as a reformer, served as president for almost 20 years and supported the UAE in its rapid economic development. The passing of the president is not expected to generate political instability or lead to major changes in policy direction in the Emirates. His successor Sheikh Mohammed, who has occupied important positions under Sheikh Khalifa and acted as de facto leader for years, is expected to pursue the current domestic and foreign policies. Moreover, the new president Sheikh Mohammed has increased UAE's political commitments in the Middle East.

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