

BY INVITATION

Fintech Forward 2025: Celebrating Bahrain’s Vision and Leadership in Financial Technology Transformation



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In an era where technology seamlessly integrates into every aspect of daily life, Fintech Forward 2025 in Bahrain stands out as a pioneering platform that anticipates the future of the financial sector and celebrates digital transformation as a cornerstone of sustainable development. Through this flagship event, the Kingdom has successfully cemented its position as a regional hub for financial technology, combining progressive regulatory vision with intelligent infrastructure, and attracting global experts, innovators, and decision-makers.

From my professional perspective, and with deep involvement in digital transformation, I recognize that the pace of technological advancement is accelerating at an unprecedented rate, profoundly reshaping all vital sectors. The financial industry, in particular, has evolved from rapid digital growth to a state of digital maturity, in alignment with global infrastructure evolution. Technology is no longer a supporting enabler, it has become the core infrastructure of every project, industry, and sector, and the foundation upon which innovation, resilience, and competitiveness are built.

Technology today represents the future of all domains, including traditional, emerging, and small enterprises. Concepts such as open banking, ESG analytics, digital ID, digital wallets, contactless payments and AI-driven are no longer theoretical they are practical realities reshaping institutional relationships and redefining compliance, transparency, and financial inclusion.

Through the FinTech Forward initiatives, Bahrain has placed itself at the heart of the digital transformation, leading innovation in the financial sector, not only by hosting global dialogue, but through tangible initiatives such as the regulatory sandbox launched by the Central Bank of Bahrain, one of the first experimental environments in the region. Strategic partnerships between regulators, investors, and tech firms reflect institutional maturity and a forward looking vision that continues to strengthen Bahrain's position as a regional leader in financial innovation.

Another significant outcome of this transformation is the rise of digital identity as a vital national asset. Its role extends far beyond electronic verification, it now serves as the foundation for numerous public and private initiatives. Digital identity is the citizen's gateway to services, the cornerstone of trust in the digital economy, and a powerful enabler for institutions to build safer and more efficient experiences. It has become an integral part of national identity and a sovereign infrastructure component.

In conclusion, the future of the financial sector is now fundamentally intertwined with technology. Every technological advancement opens new horizons for finance, and every digital innovation reshapes the economic infrastructure. Fintech Forward 2025 is not just an annual event, it is the strategic embodiment of a national vision that sees technology as the future, Bahrain as a platform for leadership, and national competencies as the pillar of sustainability.

(The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Daily Tribune)

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Israel returns 30 bodies to Gaza

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AFP | Gaza City, Palestinian
Territories

Israel returned the bodies of 30 Palestinians to Gaza yesterday, bringing the total number handed over under the ceasefire deal to 195, the health ministry in the Hamas-run territory said.

Under the deal brokered by US President Donald Trump, Israel was to turn over the bodies of 15 Palestinians for every deceased Israeli returned.

Israel's military said yesterday that the remains of two more hostages returned the day before from Gaza had been identified as those of Aryeh Zalmanovich and Master Sergeant Tamir Adar.

Since October 10, the remains of 15 hostages have been returned, out of the 28 pledged to be handed over by Hamas under the ceasefire deal.

Gaza's health ministry said that 57 of the returned Palestinian bodies had so far been identified by their relatives, while 54 unidentified bodies had been buried on Wednesday.

Gaza's civil defence agency, a rescue force operating under Hamas authority, said the funeral procession began at Nasser Hospital in the southern city of Khan Yunis and proceeded to a cemetery in Deir el-Balah, in central Gaza.

AFP footage from Nasser Hospital showed dozens of bodies



The remains of unidentified Palestinians are buried at a cemetery in Deir al-Balah, in the central Gaza Strip



The remains of unidentified Palestinians lie outside Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis, in the southern Gaza Strip, after their bodies were returned by Israel under a US-brokered ceasefire deal

laid out on the floor in white body bags as rescue workers stood in a line to pray over the dead.

Umm Hassan Hammad said she had been unable to identify the body of her son who has been missing since October 7, 2023.

“Every day I come here, maybe I recognise him from his clothes or the trousers he went out in since October 7,” she said.

US pushes plan to disarm Hamas and rebuild Gaza

AFP | Jerusalem, Undefined

US Vice President JD Vance warned Wednesday of the tough task ahead in disarming Hamas and building a peaceful future for Gaza, as Washington sought to reassure its ally Israel over the next steps in its ambitious ceasefire deal.

Vance met Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on the second day of a trip to Israel, part of a diplomatic blitz in support of the US-brokered plan to end the fighting, recover hostages and, eventually, rebuild the devastated Palestinian territory.

“We have a very, very tough task ahead of us, which is to disarm Hamas but rebuild Gaza, to make life better for the people of Gaza, but also to ensure that



Hamas is no longer a threat to our friends in Israel,” Vance said.

Vance had kicked off the three-day visit on Tuesday by opening the Civil-Military Coordination Centre (CMCC) in southwest Israel, where US and allied troops will work with Israeli forces to monitor the truce and to oversee aid to Gaza.

Turkish troops?
“A lot of our Israeli friends working together with a lot of Americans to actually mediate

this entire ceasefire process, to get some of the critical infrastructure off the ground,” Vance said, after talks with Netanyahu in Jerusalem.

Vance cited an “international security force” as one of the bodies that would have to be set up. Under US President Donald Trump's 20-point plan, this military mission would keep the peace in Gaza as Israel withdraws.

Several US allies are considering joining the force, but no American troops would be on the ground inside Gaza, instead coordinating from the CMCC in Kiryat Gat, Israel.

Reports that Israel's outspoken critic and regional rival Turkey could provide troops have rattled Israeli opinion.

Netanyahu said decisions on the new security force would be made in discussion with the United States, but on Turkey's role he said: “I have very strong opinions about that. You want to guess what they are?”

The Israeli military said Wednesday the remains of two more hostages returned the day before had been identified as Aryeh Zalmanovich and Master Sergeant Tamir Adar.

Zalmanovich, 85 at the time of his death, was abducted from his home in kibbutz Nir Oz and killed in captivity on November 17, 2023, the military said.

The soldier Adar, 38 when he died, was killed while fighting to defend Nir Oz on October 7, 2023, and his body was taken captive, it said.