

**LEBTALKS INTERVIEW:
INTERNATIONAL ENERGY EXPERT
ROUDI BAROUDI APPLAUDS
'HISTORIC' LEBANON-CYPRUS
DEAL, DISMISSES 'BASELESS'
CRITICISMS FROM NEIGHBORS**



Following criticism of the Lebanon-Cyprus Maritime Boundary Agreement (MBA) by the governments of Israel and Turkiye, LebTalks spoke with energy and policy expert Roudi Baroudi, who has authored several books and studies on sea borders in the Eastern Mediterranean. Baroudi praised the pact as “full of positives” for the interests of both parties and stressed the words of Lebanese President Joseph Aoun, who pledged after signing the MBA that “this agreement targets no one and excludes no one.”

LebTalks: How significant is the signing of the maritime boundary agreement between Lebanon and Cyprus?

RB: The official signing of the Lebanon-Cyprus deal is a major achievement, one that confers important advantages on both parties. This process was delayed for a very long time for no good reason, so President Joseph Aoun and the government deserve congratulations for having seized the initiative, and for having seen the job through to completion. So do Cypriot President Nikos Christodoulides and his team, because they did the same thing. What made this historic agreement possible – after an impasse lasting almost two decades – was that Lebanon finally had a president who both understood the need for an

MBA and made achieving it a top priority.

LebTalks: What does Lebanon gain by signing this deal?

RB: The agreement, which was reached by the negotiating teams in September, provides several benefits for both countries in the short, medium, and long terms.

The new equidistance line between the two states, defined according to the rules and guidelines of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), provides a fair and largely uniform boundary between the two brotherly countries' maritime zones. Most of the new turning points used to draw the line have moved in Lebanon's favor compared to the earlier negotiation in 2011, giving it an extra 10,200 meters on its western front while Cyprus received 2,760 meters.

Crucially, the MBA wipes away all overlapping claims caused by previous uncertainty over the precise location of the border. Accordingly, this eliminates 108 km² of (map attached) Lebanese offshore blocks that were actually in Cypriot waters, as well as 14 km² of Cypriot blocks which were also on the wrong side of the line.

Apart from removing a key risk for would-be investors, the agreement also contributes to stability and security by providing clarity and thereby enabling easier cooperation, not just bilateral, but also, potentially, involving other states as well. It really is full of positives for both Lebanon and Cyprus, and therefore for the region as a whole.

LebTalks: What should Lebanon do to follow up on this agreement?

RB: To make the most of this clearer playing field, the logical next step is for Lebanon and Cyprus to immediately start drafting a joint development agreement, which would allow them to have a smooth partnership in place for any hydrocarbon reserves which are found to straddle their

maritime boundary.

Perhaps the most important feature of the Lebanon-Cyprus MBA is that it provides a clear and stable starting point, putting Lebanon in ideal position to finish defining its maritime zones. The new line means that Lebanon's existing maritime boundary arrangements with Israel, signed in 2022, should be tweaked a little, but it also makes it easier to do that – and to negotiate a similar agreement in the north with Syria when that country's new leadership is ready to do so.



LebTalks: What about the objections voiced by Israel and Türkiye?

RB: With all due respect, these claims and complaints are completely baseless. As President Aoun has stressed from the very day it was signed, this accord targets no one, excludes no one, challenges no one else's borders, and undermines no one else's interests. I know there has been some negative commentary from both Israel and Türkiye, but there really is nothing here for anyone to be upset about. The line agreed to by Lebanon and Cyprus, which Türkiye has claimed is 'unfair' to residents of the self-styled 'Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus', is literally several kilometers away from any waters claimed by the TRNC. Beirut and Nicosia were very careful to make sure of this.

As for the Israelis, the only material change relating to the Lebanon-Cyprus line is that it pushes the Israel-Cyprus line in Cyprus' favor. But that's not Lebanon's fault. Or Cyprus' or anyone else's. It's just a fact of new mapping technologies, which today are far more precise and more accurate than those used when the Israel-Cyprus line was drawn in their 2011 treaty.

On that subject, I would also note for all stakeholders in the East Med that while Lebanon and Cyprus are the region's only

full-fledged members of UNCLOS, all states are subject to its rules and precedents, which have become part of Customary International Law. Since the Lebanon-Cyprus deal adheres strictly to those rules and the science behind them, the criticisms haven't got a legal leg to stand on. This is especially true with regard to Israel, whose own treaty with Cyprus was negotiated on the basis of the very same laws, rules, and science.

I have to assume that a lot of this is posturing, that both Israel and Türkiye will settle down once they've had more time to analyze the deal and see that, far from damaging them in any way, it could help all concerned by contributing to regional stability and economic growth. And again, I would go back to Aoun's words on signing day, when he declared that "this agreement should be a foundation for wider regional cooperation, replacing the language of violence, war, and ambitions of domination with stability and prosperity."

Lebanon and Cyprus Seal Landmark Maritime Boundary Agreement



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tweaked a little, but it also makes it easier to do that—and to negotiate a similar agreement in the north with Syria when that country's new leadership is ready to do so.

What Africans want from COP30



The upcoming UN Climate Change Conference (COP30) will be the first to take place in the Amazon, sending a powerful symbolic message about the central role developing economies must play in the global response to the climate crisis. But at a time of geopolitical fragmentation and low trust in multilateralism, symbolism is not enough. Developing economies must plan and propel the green transition. Africa is no exception.

So far, Africa's climate narrative has been one of victimhood: the continent contributes less than 4% of global greenhouse-gas emissions, but it is highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. This disparity fuelled the calls for "climate justice" that helped to produce ambitious climate-financing pledges from the industrialised economies at past COPs. But with those pledges going unfulfilled, and Africa's climate-finance needs rising fast, moral appeals are clearly not enough.

A shift to a more strategy-oriented discourse is already underway. The Second Africa Climate Summit (ACS2), which took place in Addis Ababa last month, positioned the continent as a united actor capable of shaping global climate negotiations. It also produced several initiatives, such as the Africa Climate Innovation Compact and the African Climate Facility, that promise to strengthen Africa's position in efforts to ensure a sustainable future.

Instead of continuing to wait for aid, Africa is now seeking to attract investment in its green transition, not because rich countries “owe” Africans – though they do – but rather because Africa can help the world tackle climate change. But success will require progress on four fronts, all of which will be addressed at COP30.

The first is the cost of capital. Because systemic bias is embedded in credit-rating methodologies and global prudential rules, African countries face the world’s highest borrowing costs. This deters private capital, without which climate finance cannot flow at scale. While multilateral development banks (MDBs) can help to bridge the gap, they typically favour loans – which increase African countries’ already-formidable debt burdens – rather than grants.

At COP29, developed economies agreed to raise “at least” \$300bn per year for developing-country climate action by 2035, as part of a wider goal for all actors to mobilise at least \$1.3tn per year. If these targets are to be reached, however, systemic reform is essential. This includes changes to MDB governance, so that African countries have a greater voice, and increased grant-based financing. Reform also must include recognition of African financial institutions with preferred creditor status, and the cultivation of a new Africa-led financial architecture that lowers the cost of capital.

The second area where progress is essential is carbon markets. Despite its huge potential for nature-based climate solutions, Africa captures only 16% of the global carbon-credit market. Moreover, the projects are largely underregulated and poorly priced, with limited community involvement. Africa is now at risk of falling into a familiar trap: supplying cheap offsets for external actors’ emissions, while reaping few benefits for its people.

While some African countries are developing their own carbon-market regulations, a fragmented system will have limited

impact. What Africa needs is an integrated carbon market, regulated by Africans, to ensure the quality of projects, set fair prices, and channel revenues toward local development priorities, including conservation, renewable energy, and resilient agriculture. This system should be linked with Article 6 of the Paris climate agreement, which aims to facilitate the voluntary trading of carbon credits among countries.

The third imperative for Africa at COP30 is to redefine adaptation. Rather than treating it primarily as a humanitarian project, governments must integrate adaptation into their industrial policies. After all, investment in climate-resilient agriculture, infrastructure, and water systems generates jobs, fosters innovation, and spurs market integration.

By linking adaptation to industrialisation, Africa can continue what it started at ACS2, shifting the narrative from vulnerability to value creation. Africa should push for this approach to be reflected in the indicators for the Global Goal on Adaptation, which are set to be finalised at COP30. The continent's leaders should also call for adaptation finance to be integrated into broader trade and technology frameworks.

The final priority area for Africa at COP30 is critical minerals. Africa possesses roughly 85% of the world's manganese, 80% of its platinum and chromium, 47% of its cobalt, 21% of its graphite, and 6% of its copper. In 2022, the Democratic Republic of the Congo alone accounted for over 70% of global cobalt production.

But Africa knows all too well that natural-resource wealth does not necessarily translate into economic growth and development. Only by building value chains on the continent can Africa avoid the "resource curse" and ensure that its critical-mineral wealth generates local jobs and industries. This imperative must be reflected in discussions within the

Just Transition Work Programme at COP30.

These four priorities are linked by a deeper philosophical imperative. The extractive logic of the past – in which industrialisation depended on exploitation and destruction – must give way to a more holistic, just, and balanced approach, which recognises that humans belong to nature, not the other way around. Africa can help to lead this shift, beginning at COP30.

The barriers to progress are formidable. China likes to tout South-South solidarity, but it does not necessarily put its money where its mouth is. The European Union is struggling to reconcile competing priorities and cope with political volatility. The US will not attend COP30 at all, potentially emboldening others to resist ambitious action. If consensus proves elusive, parties might pursue “mini-lateral” deals, which sideline Africa.

When it comes to the green transition, Africa’s interests are everyone’s interests. If the continent is locked into poverty and fossil-fuel dependency, global temperatures will continue to rise rapidly. But if Africa is empowered to achieve green industrialisation, the rest of the world will gain a critical ally in the fight for a sustainable future. – Project Syndicate

- *Carlos Lopes, COP30 Special Envoy for Africa, is Chair of the African Climate Foundation Board and a professor at the Nelson Mandela School of Public Governance at the University of Cape Town.*
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بارودي يهنئ باتفاق الترسيم ويدعو لتعاون لبناني – قبرصي في الحقول البحرية



قال الخبير في شؤون الطاقة رودي بارودي في مقابلة حصرية مع إن اتفاقية الحدود البحرية بين لبنان وقبرص خطوة "LebTalks: رائعة وضرورية وتعطينا الأمل، لأنها لا تقتصر على تحديد أساس للتعاون بين الفريقين، بل تسهم أيضاً في تقليص المخاطر عليهما،" وتُظهر للمنطقة والعالم مدى فاعلية الحوار والديبلوماسية.

ولفت بارودي إلى أن "هذه الخطوة تُتَوَجَّح مساراً تأخر بلا داعٍ لما يقارب العقدين أذ كان مجمّداً منذ العام 2007، ما يجعل الإنجاز أكثر قيمة، معتبراً أن رئيس الحكومة نواف سلام وفريقه قاموا بدورهم من خلال دعم الاتفاق، لكن الفضل في تحريك الملف من الجانب اللبناني يعود بالدرجة الأولى إلى الرئيس عون، ولذلك يُعتبر هذا إنجازاً شخصياً له، وينطبق الأمر ذاته على الرئيس القبرصي نيكوس خريستودوليدس، فهذه محطة تاريخية للبلدين معا".

وعن أهمية هذه المعاهدة، أوضح بارودي أن "تسوية الحدود البحرية أمر بالغ الأهمية في الوقت الراهن، لأنها تفتح الباب أمام فرص جديدة، فالاتفاق يجعل لبنان أكثر جاذبية للشركاء الدوليين الكبار الذين يحتاج إليهم لتطوير قطاع النفط والغاز البحري الناشئ. وإذا تمكّن هذا القطاع من أن يحقق جزء بسيط من إمكانياته، فإن الفوائد ستصل إلى كل الاقتصاد اللبناني تقريباً، ما يجعل من هذا الاتفاق "سبباً" للاحتفال الوطني. والأمر نفسه ينطبق على قبرص.

وهذا بارودي الحكومة اللبنانية على قرار منح حقوق الاستكشاف في البلوك البحري رقم 8 إلى ائتلاف دولي قوي وذو سمعة ممتازة يضم شركات توتال اينرجي الفرنسية وإيني الإيطالية وقطر للطاقة القطرية، لافتاً إلى أن هذين القرارين يمهدان الطريق أمام مستقبل يصبح فيه لبنان دولة منتجة ومصدّرة للغاز، ما يوفر زخماً غير "مسبوق لاقتصاد في أمسّ الحاجة إلى كل دعم".

لكن بارودي حذّر من أن الطريق لا يزال طويلاً أمام التنفيذ الفعلي، قائلاً: "الخطوة الأهم الآن هي المتابعة فعلى الحكومة أن تُنفّذ

سلسلة من الإصلاحات المطلوبة منها، وأن تستثمر في بناء القدرات، وتُبقي على الكفاءات والخبرات لإدارة الموارد البحرية وصونها كما أن لبنان يحتاج إلى اتفاق لترسيم الحدود البحرية والبرية مع سوريا، وتحديد نقطة ثلاثية على ذلك الجانب بين لبنان وقبرص وسوريا، وهناك مؤشرات إيجابية مع الحكومة السورية الجديدة".

وتابع بارودي قائلاً إن على بيروت أيضاً أن تضع خطة واضحة لتطوير قطاع النفط والغاز البحري؛ و"أغتنم هذه المناسبة لأقترح أن تبادر الحكومة اللبنانية فوراً إلى دعوة نظيرتها القبرصية للتفاوض حول اتفاق تطوير مشترك، ينظم تقاسم أي موارد نفطية أو غازية مشتركة تقع على جانبي الحدود البحرية، فإبرام اتفاق بهذا الخصوص سيجعل قطاعي الطاقة البحريين في كلا البلدين أكثر جاذبية للمستثمرين". وختم بارودي بحماسة قائلاً: "هذه هي الأبواب التي فُتحت أمامنا بفضل اتفاق ترسيم الحدود البحري. لذا، مرة أخرى، نتقدم بالشكر والتهنئة إلى الرئيس عون والرئيس خريستودوليدس على حكمتهما في السعي وراء هذا الاتفاق، وشجاعتهما في المثابرة حتى النهاية".

Baroudi congratulates Lebanese government on boundary deal with Cyprus



The decision of the Council of Ministers to approve Lebanon's maritime boundary agreement (MBA) with Cyprus is a genuine tour de force, a feather in the cap for President Joseph Aoun and his government.

This step caps a process that was unnecessarily delayed for almost two decades, but that only makes this achievement more gratifying.

Having settled maritime boundaries is crucial right now because of the opportunities it opens up. The agreement makes Lebanon much more attractive to the major international partners it needs to develop its nascent offshore oil and gas sector. If and when that sector reaches even a small fraction of its potential, the benefits should flow to virtually every corner of the Lebanese economy, so everyone in the country should really celebrate this.

As if to punctuate the moment, the Council of Ministers also awarded the rights to a key offshore area, Block 8, to a reputable international consortium consisting of France's TotalEnergies, Italy's ENI, and Qatar's QatarEnergy.

Together, these moves help to pave the road toward a future in which Lebanon becomes an energy producer and exporter, adding unprecedented momentum to an economy that desperately needs it.

These are both major milestones, and the government – along with President Joseph Aoun, whose own leadership on the border deal was crucial to initiating the negotiations – deserves plenty of credit.

The important part now is the follow-up. The government still needs to implement a long list of reforms, invest in capacity building, and retain competent personnel and managers to steward and safeguard the country's offshore resources. It also will need to do its homework on how best to nurture that offshore business.

There is so much to be done – but so much to be claimed by doing it! Getting the MBL with Cyprus finalized was at the top of the list, and resolving Block 8 was not far down, so the government deserves congratulations for both.

And since I mentioned nurturing, I also take this opportunity to propose that the Lebanese government immediately invite its Cypriot counterpart to negotiate another crucial deal: a joint

development agreement, or JDA, which would govern the sharing of any oil and/or gas resources which straddle their border at sea. Setting up a JDA now would not only prevent possible delays in the future – it also would make both countries' offshore energy sectors even more attractive to investors.

Σε συνομιλίες η Κύπρος για την ΑΟΖ με τον Λίβανο. Οι επαφές που κάνει ο πρόεδρος της Κύπρου



Οι τεταμένες σχέσεις Ισραήλ-Λιβάνου και οι ραγδαίες εξελίξεις στη Μέση Ανατολή έχουν κινητοποιήσει τη Λευκωσία για επαφές υψηλού επιπέδου για την επικύρωση της ΑΟΖ με το Λίβανο. Έτσι ο πρόεδρος της Κύπρου Νίκος Χριστοδουλίδης συναντήθηκε με τον εμπειρογνώμονα περιφερειακής πολιτικής Ρούντι Μπραούντι, μακροχρόνιος υποστηρικτής του διαλόγου, της διπλωματίας και της ειρηνικής ανάπτυξης, ως προς τις ασφαλέστερες διαδρομές προς μεγαλύτερη σταθερότητα για ολόκληρη την Ευρω-Μεσογειακή περιοχή και άτυπο διαμεσολαβητή των δύο χωρών. Μάλιστα έχει γράψει και σχετικά βιβλία, όπως την «οριστικοποίηση θαλάσσιων Συνόρων στην Ανατολική Μεσόγειο: Ποιος θα Είναι ο Επόμενος;» και «Ένα Κλειδί, Πολλαπλά Έπαθλα: Οριστικοποίηση θαλάσσιων Συνόρων ανάμεσα στην Κύπρο, το Λίβανο και τη Συρία».

Ο κ. Χριστοδουλίδης και ο ομόλογός του από το Λίβανο, ο πρώην Γενικός Τζόζεφ Αουν, συμφώνησαν τον Ιούλιο να διαπραγματευτούν και να οριστικοποιήσουν μια γραμμή θαλάσσιων συνόρων . Και οι δύο χώρες αναμένουν ότι θα αποκομίσουν πολλά οφέλη από μια

τέτοια συμφωνία, και η κατοχύρωση εδαφικών συνόρων στη θάλασσα θα καταστήσει ευκολότερη την προσέλκυση ξένων επενδυτών για την ανάπτυξη των ενεργειακών πηγών τους.

«Η επίτευξη συμφωνίας θα ανοίξει όλες τις πόρτες για την Κύπρο και το Λίβανο», δήλωσε ο κ. Μπαρούντι μετά από τη συνάντηση. «Οι τάσεις πηγαίνουν στη σωστή κατεύθυνση, και όχι μόνο σε σχέση με το Λίβανο. Ο πρόεδρος της Κύπρου έχει φιλόδοξα σχέδια εξωτερικής πολιτικής, ιδιαίτερα σχετικά με τις δραστηριότητες της Κύπρου τους πρώτους έξι μήνες του 2026, όταν θα έχει την προεδρία του συμβουλίου της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης».

«Εκμεταλλεύτηκα επίσης την ευκαιρία να ευχηθώ στο πρόεδρο της Κύπρου καλή επιτυχία σε αυτή την αποστολή», πρόσθεσε, «ειδικά καθώς αναμένεται να εστιάσει όχι μόνο στην ενίσχυση της συνοχής της Ευρώπης, αλλά και στην ενίσχυση του ρόλου της Κύπρου ως γέφυρα μεταξύ Ευρώπης και γειτονικών χωρών.»

Πράγματι, η Λευκωσία έχει ένα φιλόδοξο πρόγραμμα για την προεδρία της και συνεργάζεται στενά με τη Δανία, που ασκεί την προεδρία αυτό το εξάμηνο, και την Πολωνία, που θα διαδεχθεί την Κύπρο. Η λεγόμενη «τριπλή προεδρία» βοηθά στη διασφάλιση συνέχειας από τη μία προεδρία στην επόμενη.

Ο κ. Μπαρούντι έχει γράψει αρκετά βιβλία και μελέτες σχετικά με το πώς τα υπάρχοντα εργαλεία του ΟΗΕ μπορούν να βοηθήσουν τις παράκτιες χώρες να συμφωνήσουν δίκαια και ισότιμα θαλάσσια σύνορα, να μειώσουν τις εντάσεις και να αποκομίσουν σημαντικά οικονομικά και κοινωνικά οφέλη. Έχει επίσης γράψει και μιλήσει δημόσια για διάφορες ευκαιρίες περιφερειακής συνεργασίας, από διασυνδεδεμένα ενεργειακά δίκτυα και υπεράκτια αιολικά πάρκα μέχρι κοινή διαχείριση θαλάσσιων προστατευόμενων περιοχών.

Το 2023, απονεμήθηκε στον κ. Μπαρούντι το Βραβείο Ηγεσίας από το Transatlantic Leadership Network, ένα think-tank της Ουάσινγκτον, για τη «πολύτιμη συμβολή του στην οικοδόμηση μιας ειρηνικής και ευημερούσας Ανατολικής Μεσογείου».

Σε δεκάδες άρθρα, μελέτες, εμφανίσεις στα μέσα ενημέρωσης και

ομιλίες, για παράδειγμα, ο βετεράνος της κλάδου έχει τεκμηριώσει την επιχειρηματική βάση για το νησιωτικό κράτος να γίνει κέντρο επεξεργασίας και διανομής φυσικού αερίου για τους γείτονές του. Αυτό θα περιελάμβανε την Κύπρο να δημιουργήσει έναν υπόθαλάσσιο αγωγό φυσικού αερίου προς την ευρωπαϊκή ενδοχώρα, ένα εργοστάσιο υγροποιημένου φυσικού αερίου (LNG) που θα ήταν το μεγαλύτερο έργο που έχει ποτέ η χώρα, ή και υπεράκτια πλωτά συστήματα αποθήκευσης και υγροποίησης για την εξυπηρέτηση απομακρυσμένων χωρών δια θαλάσσης.

«Όλες αυτές οι μελέτες και οι παράγοντες που ανέδειξαν παραμένουν επίκαιροι σήμερα», δήλωσε ο κ. Μπαρούντι. «Η Κύπρος διαθέτει την εγγύτητα, τις τιμές γης και τις σχέσεις με τους γείτονές της για να γίνει ο συνεταιριστής όλων στις εξαγωγές ενέργειας, αλλά και να λειτουργήσει ως θεμέλιος λίθος για μια πιο σταθερή και ευημερούσα περιοχή.»

Amid Maritime Boundary Talks in the Region, Cypriot President Receives International Energy Expert, Roudi Baroudi, on UN Demarcation Tools



NICOSIA – 29, September 2025: Cypriot President Nikos Christodoulides met today with the international energy policy expert, Roudi Baroudi, who presented copies of his two latest books, “Settling Maritime Boundaries in the Eastern

Mediterranean: Who Will Be Next?" and "One Key, Multiple Prizes: Settling Maritime Boundaries Among Cyprus, Lebanon, and Syria".

Baroudi, a long-time advocate of dialogue, diplomacy, and peaceful development as the surest routes to greater stability for the entire Euro-Med region, said he felt "honored to have been received by the President."

Christodoulides and his Lebanese counterpart, former General Joseph Aoun, agreed in July to have their respective teams negotiate and finalize a maritime boundary line (MBL). Both countries expect to derive numerous benefits from such a pact, and having treated borders at sea will make it easier to attract the foreign investors required to develop their respective offshore oil and gas resources.

Reaching a deal "will open up all sorts of doors for Cyprus and Lebanon," Baroudi said after the meeting. "The trends are going in the right direction, and not just vis-à-vis Lebanon. The President has ambitious foreign-policy plans, particularly with regard to Cyprus' activities for the first six months of 2026, when it will hold the rotating presidency of the European Union."

"I also took the opportunity to wish His Excellency every good fortune on that mission," he added, "especially since it is expected to focus not only on shoring up Europe's cohesion, but also on beefing up Cyprus' role as a bridge between Europe and its neighbors."

Indeed, Nicosia does have an ambitious agenda for its time in the presidency, and is working closely with Denmark, the current holder, and Poland, which will follow Cyprus' term. The so-called "trio presidency" helps to ensure continuity from one presidency to the next.

Baroudi has published several books and studies on how existing United Nations tools can help coastal states to agree

fair and equitable maritime boundaries, reduce tensions, and reap significant economic and social rewards in the bargain. He also has written and spoken publicly about a variety of opportunities for regional cooperation, from interconnected power grids and offshore wind farms to joint management of marine protected areas. In 2023, he was awarded the Transatlantic Leadership Award by the Transatlantic Leadership Network, a Washington think-tank, for what it described as “his valuable contribution in building a peaceful and prosperous Eastern Mediterranean.”

In addition to these works, ever since 2011, when the full potential of the East Med’s offshore hydrocarbon deposits began to emerge, Baroudi’s advocacy role has seen him provide thought leadership for a variety of projects and proposals that would transform Cyprus into a regional energy hub. In dozens of articles, studies, media appearances, and speaking engagements, for example, the industry veteran has made the business case for the island nation to become a gas processing and distribution center for its neighbors. This would include Cyprus hosting one end of an undersea gas pipeline to the European mainland, a liquified natural gas (LNG) plant that would be the country’s largest-ever project, and/or offshore floating storage and gasification units(s) to serve more distant customers by ship.

“All of these studies and the factors they highlighted are still relevant today,” Baroudi said. “Cyprus has the proximity, the land prices, and the relationships with its neighbors to make it everyone’s partner for energy exports, but also to serve as the bedrock for a stabler and more prosperous region.”

بارودي: استجرار الكهرباء والغاز من قبرص ينوع مصادر الطاقة ويحميها من أي تداعيات جيوسياسية



تبدو العلاقات اللبنانية القبرصية في حال تطور سريع وقد فتح هذا الباب رئيس الجمهورية العماد جوزاف عون فلاقى استجابة ورغبة عارمة لدى نظيره القبرصي كريستو دوليديس تجاه تطوير العلاقة بين البلدين الجارين وما لفت أن الرئيس القبرصي هو الذي بادر وطرح على الرئيس عون استجرار الكهرباء من قبرص إلى لبنان وقد تلقف رئيس الجمهورية اللبنانية هذه المبادرة وطلب من وزير الطاقة جو صدي متابعة الموضوع.

وفي هذا السياق أثنى خبير الطاقة الدولي رودي بارودي على مبادرة الرئيس القبرصي واللبناني، مؤكداً وجوب الترحيب بأي خطوة من هذا النوع باعتبارها نقطة انطلاق مهمة لتأمين الكهرباء للبنانيين وحل أزمة القطاع المستفحلة جزئياً منذ عقود وأن هذه الخطوة تأتي بعد الإعلان عن استئناف مفاوضات ترسيم الحدود البحرية بين البلدين. كما أثنى بارودي على الدور الذي يلعبه الرئيس عون في ملف الطاقة ككل واعتباره أولوية لما فيه من فائدة على الاقتصاد وتعزيز القدرات الاجتماعية للمواطنين اللبنانيين.

ولفت بارودي إلى أن هذه الخطوة ستتيح تزويد لبنان ما بين 150 و300 ميغاواط وفق مراحل متعددة ولا سيما بعد عام أو عامين على الأكثر عندما تبدأ قبرص بإنتاج الكهرباء من الغاز المستخرج من ENI & TOTAL ENERGIES حقلها البحرية خاصة حقل كرونوس الذي يديره كل من شركتي ما يعزز تنوع مصادر الطاقة وبأسعار مقبولة لا سيما وأن الحقل المعني في قبرص لا يبعد عن حقل زهر المصري سوى ٦٠ كلم ما يعني أن كلفة الإستخراج ستكون مماثلة لتلك المعتمدة في الحقل المصري وهي كلفة رخيصة نوعاً ما.

ولفت بارودي إلى وجود محطتين رئيسيتين لإنتاج الكهرباء في قبرص، بين ليماسول Vassiliko إحداهما بين لارنكا وليماسول، والأخرى في وبافوس، بقدرة إجمالية تقارب 1600 ميغاواط من دون الكهرباء المنتجة من الطاقة الشمسية وبالتالي يمكن للبنان الاستفادة من هذه الطاقة بكلفة يتم التوافق عليها موضحاً أن الكلفة ستكون أقل بكثير من كلفة الكهرباء المنتجة في لبنان عندما تبدأ قبرص العام المقبل باستخدام الغاز المستخرج من حقولها البحرية لإنتاج الكهرباء. ولاسيما البلوك رقم 6.

بارودي طالب الحكومة اللبنانية بالإسراع بوضع الأطر الإصلاحية والتنظيمية للقطاع بشأن استجرار الكهرباء من قبرص وبإعداد دراسة جدوى اقتصادية تأخذ في الاعتبار كلفة الاستجرار ولفت أن محطة هي المحطة التي تصدر الغاز في 2026، على أن يواصل Vassiliko لبنان مساعيه لربط شبكته بالشبكة السورية للحصول على دعم إضافي كهربائي عن طريق محطة دير نبوح، بما في ذلك محطة الكسارة في منطقة البقاع.

قبرص تُنتج 5 آلاف ميغاواط! ما حصّة لبنان منها؟



المركزية- على وقع التحديات الأمنية وتهديداتها، يجهد رئيس الجمهورية العماد جوزاف عون لتحريك الملفات الاقتصادية الاستراتيجية التي من شأنها أن تُنهض البلاد من كبوتها التي أوصلتها إلى حدّ الانهيار... فهو لا يوفّر فرصة وجوده في الخارج، حيث يكتفّ من رحلاته الرسمية للهدف المنوّه عنه، إلا ويتطرّق مع نظرائه العرب والأجانب إلى إمكانيات التعاون في سبيل تعزيز العلاقات الاقتصادية والمشاريع الاستثمارية مع لبنان.

وليست مفاوضات المثمرة التي أجراها مع نظيره القبرصي نيكوس خريستودوليدس خلال زيارته الرسمية الأخيرة إلى نيقوسيا، سوى الدليل الثابت على مساعيه الحثيثة إلى وصل لبنان بالخارج بعد انقطاعٍ

دام سنوات لأسباب باتت معروفة علّها "تُذكر ولا تُعاد"! ومن ثمار تلك الزيارة، الإعلان عن تحقيق تقدّم كبير في الجانب التقني من ملف استكمال المفاوضات حول ترسيم الحدود البحرية بين البلدين، والعمل على تحويل النتائج التقنية إلى صيغة سياسية قابلة للتنفيذ، على غرار اتفاق ترسيم الحدود مع إسرائيل الذي أبرم في تشرين الأول عام 2022 بواسطة أميركية...

لكن هذه الخطوة لم تكن الوحيدة التي خرج بها الرئيسان اللبناني والقبرصي من لقاء نيقوسيا، بل أحدث طرح الرئيس خريستودوليدس مدّ كابل بحري من الجزيرة لتزويد لبنان بالكهرباء، خرقاً في ملف الطاقة اللبنانية النازف، على رغم أن الطرح يتطلب دراسة جدوى مفصّلة تسبق الحماسة على المضي فيه...

إذ في انتظار وصول وفد تقني قبرصي إلى بيروت في الأيام المقبلة لاستكمال المفاوضات حول ترسيم الحدود البحرية بين البلدين، يستعدّ وزير الطاقة والمياه جو الصديّ لزيارة قبرص ولقاء المسؤولين الرسميين والمعنيين بقطاع الطاقة، بهدف متابعة الطرح القبرصي لتزويد لبنان بالكهرباء، والاطلاع على حيثيات المشروع وتفاصيله كافة.

بارودي يرصد... ويسأل

في غضون ذلك، يثني الخبير الدولي في شؤون الطاقة والعضو في "معهد شبكة القيادة عبر الأطلسي" في واشنطن رودي بارودي على طرح الرئيس القبرصي، ويشدد عبر "المركزية" على "وجوب الترحيب بأي مبادرة من هذا القبيل"، معتبراً أنها "خطوة جيّدة في مسار تأمين الكهرباء للبنانيين وبالتالي توفير الحلول الضرورية لأزمة القطاع المستفحلة طوال عقود".

ويشير في السياق، إلى أن "مسافة 160.9 كيلومتراً تفصل بين لبنان وقبرص بما يدل على القرب الجغرافي بين البلدين، وهو عامل مساعد في تنفيذ المشروع. والعامل الآخر الذي يشجّع على البحث في إمكانية الاستفادة من هذه المبادرة، أن قبرص لديها محطة إنتاج كهرباء تقع بين لارنكا وليماسول، كما لديها محطة إنتاج Vassilikoss وهي الأكبر على الإطلاق تقع بين ليماسول وبافوس. والجدير ذكره في هذا الإطار، أن الإنتاج الكهربائي لقبرص يعادل 5 آلاف و400 ميغاواط تقريباً، ومن غير المعلوم حتى الآن الكمية التي ستزوّد بها لبنان من مجموع هذا الإنتاج".

ويخلص إلى التأكيد على "وجوب الترحيب بالمبادرة القبرصية مهما كانت كمية الكهرباء التي ستزودنا بها... وإذ نهذئ الحكومة اللبنانية على مشروع استجرار الطاقة من قبرص، عليها التنبيه إلى كلفة الاستجرار الباهظة لأن قبرص تباع الكيلوواط الواحد بمبلغ يتراوح بين 35 و40 سنتاً... وهذا رقم يجب التوقف عنده في دراسة الجدوى، مع الإقرار بأهمية المشروع وانعكاساته الإيجابية على لبنان بما يساعد في حل أزمة قطاع الكهرباء المزمّنة".

"لذلك من الأهمية بمكان إعداد دراسة جدوى اقتصادية، مع التشديد على ضرورة تشجيع أي مبادرة تساعد الشعب اللبناني في تأمين ساعات تغذية إضافية من الكهرباء، ونحن نشدّ على يد الحكومة للمضي في هذه المبادرة... ولنترقب من أي محطة ستزودنا قبرص الكهرباء وبأي كمية... وكلفة" يختم بارودي.

وفي الصورة أدناه محطة Vassilikoss للطاقة في قبرص

Qatar deserves global thanks – and a whole lot more



Most of the world is watching and waiting, hoping and/or praying that a hastily arranged ceasefire between Israel and Iran will hold. If it does, there will be sighs of relief virtually everywhere; if it does not, the State of Qatar should still be considered for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Yes, you read that correctly: even if the ceasefire that it helped to secure falls apart, Qatar should be considered for what many regard as the most prestigious prize on Earth.



I believe this because peace is more important than any other cause on Earth, and pound-for-pound, no country does more than Qatar to promote peace. Peace is more than a photo

opportunity, more than a process that often allows belligerents to let their guns fall silent, more even than the gratitude of those whose lives and livelihoods are spared. It also serves other useful purposes, too, including as a commodity that promotes stronger growth and better socioeconomic development, and frees up resources for investment in education, healthcare, and transport infrastructure. Accordingly, achieving peace means more than simply not being at war: it means having the chance to better one's own situation by leaps and bounds. By extension, anyone who provides such a chance to anyone else deserves deep admiration.

By this measurement alone, Qatar's case for a Nobel is rock-solid – and has been for years, long before the world's most powerful country asked it to obtain Iranian consent to a ceasefire. A quick glance at Qatar's track record reveals a foreign policy focused almost entirely on the peaceful resolution of differences. Over the past quarter-century, Qatari diplomacy has helped to resolve or mitigate multiple crises, disputes, and conflicts in too many places to count, including Afghanistan, Darfur, Gaza, Eritrea, Iraq, Lebanon, Russia and Ukraine, Sudan and South Sudan, and Yemen. These feats have included the winding down of one all-out civil war and the prevention of another, the brokering of several exchanges involving thousands of prisoners/hostages, the securing of temporary cease-fires, the resolution of dangerous constitutional deadlocks, and – most importantly – the kindling of hope in the hearts of millions.

Not surprisingly, Qatar's diplomatic corps is almost constantly and relentlessly engaged in one form or another of peacemaking. It does not always succeed, but its investments – both political and financial – in this mission pay dividends in other ways, too. Repeated successes are their own reward, but even “failure” both raises Qatar's profile and reaffirms its commitment to dialogue and peace. In addition, both the

leadership and the professional diplomats learn important lessons from each and every engagement, making Qatari intervention increasingly effective over time. Just as importantly, this increasing effectiveness contributes to Qatar's growing reputation as an honest and capable broker, and that perception gives it still more influence, leverage, and flexibility going forward.

There are critics, of course. Many American officials, for instance, have criticised Doha for maintaining friendly relations with entities such as Hamas, the Taliban, and, indeed, the Islamic Republic of Iran. But when Washington and Paris wanted to end the presidential vacuum in Beirut, they turned to Qatar and other brotherly nations, which then helped to gain the acquiescence of Iran and Hezbollah. When Washington wanted to negotiate the release of Israeli soldiers and civilians held in Gaza, it was Qatar that made it happen. When the first Trump administration wanted a negotiated exit from Afghanistan, it was Doha that made the contacts and hosted the talks. And when the current Trump administration decided it was time for Israel and Iran to end hostilities, it was the Qataris who delivered the Iranians – and this despite the fact that Iran had just retaliated against US air strikes by lobbing missiles at a US air base inside Qatar!

In effect, the peninsula is now a platform for peace promotion, and not by accident. As impressive as they are, even Qatar's obvious enthusiasm and evident aptitude for dialogue and diplomacy cannot account for the unprecedentedly large role it has come to play on the world stage.

Instead, today's Qatar is the product of a bold strategy rooted in both purpose and principle. Led by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, the country's entire leadership views respect for international law and the maintenance of international peace and stability as existential objectives for Qatar and its population.

The Amir inherited some of this strategy from his father, but he has expansively built on it, adding both breadth of vision and depth of commitment. Even – and perhaps especially – when this approach has carried dire risks, His Highness the Amir has refused to waver, and his steadfast pursuit of fraternal relations among nation-states has continued. That resolve has been noted by state and non-state actors alike, and some former antagonists have even come to embrace and even emulate much of the Qatari approach.

That's why Qatar deserves the Nobel Peace Prize. Not because it helped end a war between Iran and Israel, but because no other country is so singularly dedicated to peace. It's the ideas behind its actions that make them special: that a country should not only refrain from seeking out conflict, should not only keenly avoid conflict unless necessary, but should also actively seek to prevent, shorten, and/or mitigate conflict among other countries as well.

What could be more noble – and therefore more Nobel-worthy – than that?

- *Roudi Baroudi is an energy and policy expert with more than four decades of experience in both the private and public sectors. The author of several books, he currently serves as CEO of Energy and Environment Holding, an independent consultancy based in Doha.*