**His Excellency Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Unveils Exhibition Highlighting Experiences of Afghan Refugees Presented by Museum of Islamic Art and Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

*Exhibition shines a spotlight on the resilience of Afghan refugees and Afghanistan’s abundant history*

**DOHA, QATAR 23 OCTOBER 2022:** His Excellency Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani today unveiled *Safar,* a temporary exhibition organised by the Museum of Islamic Art (MIA) in partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), highlighting the experiences of Afghan refugees following their evacuation in 2021. The exhibition is on view at MIA Park until 24 January 2024.

In 2021, after the Afghan government collapsed leading to a withdrawal of US and NATO troops from Afghanistan, the world rushed to evacuate thousands of displaced Afghan citizens and foreigners. Safar highlights the experiences and stories of Afghan refugees through a collection of videos, photographs, and illustrated stories beginning with a look at Afghanistan's history, the importance of its geographical position at the crossroads of ancient trade routes, its wealth and natural resources, as well as being part of the most important and largest empires, and the basis of civilizations since the Bronze Age.

Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, Chairperson of Qatar Museums attended the official unveiling of *Safar* along with several senior government officials.

His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani welcomed attendees during the opening ceremony of the exhibition, which highlights the journey of tens of thousands of Afghans and foreign nationals from Afghanistan through Qatar. In addition, the exhibition conveys a message of thanks and appreciation to all local and international partners who contributed to the success of the evacuation. His Excellency extended gratitude to the Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Defence, Government Communications Office, Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy, Ministry of Sports, Qatar Olympic Committee, Qatar Football Association, Doha Film Institute, Education Above All, Qatar Foundation, Qatar Charity, Qatar Red Crescent, Qatar Museums, Qatar Television and Qatar Airways for their collective efforts during the evacuation process.

In his opening address during the ceremony, His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani noted the role of Qatar in making one of the largest air evacuation operations in history a success, pointing to the concerted efforts of all concerned authorities in the country to facilitate the safe evacuation of more than 80,000 Afghan citizens and foreign nationals. His Excellency referred to the role of Qatar in rehabilitating Kabul Airport, which contributed to facilitating the movement of people, basic goods and humanitarian and development aid.

His Excellency stated that these extensive efforts, embodied in the *Safar* exhibition, affirm Qatar's commitment to bilateral and multilateral work, particularly global humanitarian efforts. He noted that the exhibition also serves as a great model for collective action at an international level, providing a solid foundation for large-scale cooperation in the future. His Excellency underscored the cooperation between local and international partners in making the evacuation a success.

His Excellency reiterated Qatar's commitment to its humanitarian responsibilities towards

Afghanistan and firm stance on supporting the Afghan people and their right to live with dignity and achieve reconciliation and peaceful coexistence without exclusion or discrimination and to build a bright future for present and future generations. He expressed Qatar's aspiration for the international community's continued support of the Afghan people at this critical stage to ensure their safety, stability and development.

Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa, said: “The story of the Afghan people is one of resilience in the face of the extreme challenges they experienced during the evacuation. It is an honour for Qatar Museums to partner with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to shine a spotlight on these moving stories, while celebrating Afghanistan’s rich culture and abundant history.”

The exhibition explores the experiences of Afghan refugees from a primary perspective to shed light on their unique stories and struggles following the evacuation. The exhibition also highlights the importance of Afghanistan as a centre of intellectual debate and artistic excellence for thousands of years and addresses the support of Qatar and its bilateral relations with Afghanistan over the past thirty years, as well as its role during the evacuation process in 2021.

**ENDS**

**Museum of Islamic Art**

Founded in 2008, the Museum of Islamic Art (MIA) was one of the first projects initiated

by QM. Designed by the renowned Chinese American architect I. M. Pei, the MIA is a

globally acclaimed museum that stands majestically on Doha’s Corniche, with

panoramic views of the city’s waterfront. The museum showcases Qatar’s world-class

collections of Islamic art spanning some 1,400 years. Representing the full scope of

Islamic art from the 7th to the 20th centuries, the MIA collection includes manuscripts,

ceramics, metal, glass, ivory, textiles, wood, and precious stones. The works have been

collected from three continents, including countries across the Middle East, and

reaching as far as Spain and China. MIA presents a changing programme of exhibitions

illustrating the heritage of the Islamic world, as well as extensive educational activities

for school children and families, making the museum a vital part of the community. The

MIA has become a popular museum in the region and internationally, attracting

hundreds of thousands of visitors annually. Dr. Julia Gonnella has served as director of

the museum since 2017.

**About Qatar Museums**

Qatar Museums (QM), the nation’s preeminent institution for art and culture, provides

authentic and inspiring cultural experiences through a growing network of museums,

heritage sites, festivals, public art installations, and programmes. QM preserves and

expands the nation’s cultural offerings, sharing art and culture from Qatar, the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia (MENASA) region with the world and enriching the lives of

citizens, residents, and visitors.

Under the patronage of His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, and

led by its Chairperson, Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al

Thani, QM has made Qatar a vibrant centre for the arts, culture, and education in the

Middle East and beyond.

QM is integral to the goal of developing an innovative, diverse, and progressive nation, bringing people together to ignite new thinking, spark criticalcultural conversations, and amplify the voices of Qatar’s people. Since its founding in 2005, QM has overseen the development of museums and festivals including the Museum of Islamic Art (MIA) and MIA Park, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, the National Museum of Qatar (NMOQ), 3-2-1 Qatar Olympic and Sports Museum, QM

Gallery Al Riwaq, QM Gallery Katara, and the Tasweer Qatar Photo Festival. Future projects include Dadu: Children’s Museum of Qatar, Art Mill Museum, Qatar Auto Museum and the Lusail Museum. Qatar also has one of the largest and most ambitious public art programmes in the world. Through its Department of Archaeology, QM spearheads several initiatives to preserve and restore Qatar’s historical sites and buildings. QM also initiates and supports Creative Hubs that nurture artistic talent and create opportunities to build a strong and sustainable cultural infrastructure. These include the Fire Station: Artist in Residence, M7 for innovation, fashion and design, and

Liwan Design Studios and Labs.

For more information visit https://qm.org.qa