

## **QATAR AIRWAYS WELCOMES SECOND BOEING 777-200LR**

***Plane To Be Named “Gaza” In Solidarity With Palestinian Civilian Victims***

***Aircraft To Be Deployed On Doha – Houston Route March 30***

March 2, 2009

Doha, QATAR – Qatar Airways geared up for the launch of its much-anticipated Houston route by welcoming the carrier’s second Boeing 777-200 Long Range aircraft to Qatar recently in a ceremony held at Doha International Airport.

Earlier last month, Qatar Airways took delivery of its first Boeing 777-200LR aircraft, which is capable of flying on ultra long-haul routes of up to 17 hours non-stop – effectively to any key business or leisure destination in the world from Doha.

The long range Boeings will be paired to operate Qatar Airways newest route to the United States. The Doha – Houston route, linking the energy capitals of the world is scheduled for launch on March 30, said Chief Executive Officer Akbar Al Baker. At almost 17 hours flying time, the Doha – Houston route will be one of the longest non-stop flights in the world.

Daily scheduled flights will bridge the two cities offering passengers with excellent connections beyond Houston to cities across the US and beyond Doha to destinations in the Middle East, Africa, South Asia and Far East.

There will be a number of events to celebrate Qatar Airways arrival to Houston, including a special water cannon salute and Houston and Harris County officials and business leaders welcoming Qatar Airways’ CEO Akbar Al Baker and a delegation of VIPS from Qatar at a formal ribbon-cutting ceremony. Qatar Airways also will host a lavish gala at the Wortham Center celebrating its arrival in Houston.

Al Baker said the airline’s latest asset demonstrated its commitment towards expansion with a rapidly growing fleet. The latest delivery takes Qatar Airways’ fleet size to 67 aircraft and keeps the airline well on course of its remarkable expansion with an average of one new plane joining the burgeoning fleet every month over the next few years.

Al Baker announced that the aircraft to be used on the Houston route was officially named “Gaza” in solidarity with civilian victims in the recent conflict in Gaza.

“I know many of us have been deeply touched by the civilian deaths in the recent bombing of Gaza. Qatar Airways wants to recognize that innocent people, and in particular large numbers of children, were killed in these bomb attacks, and naming our latest aircraft “Gaza” is a symbolic gesture to commemorate and honor these victims.

“The name ‘Gaza’ will fly around the world on Qatar Airways and spread a message of peace and humanity,” he said. “Qatar Airways customarily names each of its aircraft after place names within the State of Qatar. But we have made an exception in this case.”

In the lead up to the Houston launch, Qatar Airways executives made the rounds of GCC states to promote its new flights. During the hugely successful and well-received month-long promotional road show, which kicked off in Dubai in mid-January, Qatar Airways visited six cities across the GCC, meeting key travel trade and industry partners to highlight the new route.

The GCC promotional road show travelled from Dubai to Kuwait City followed by Bahrain. It then made a stop in Qatar Airways’ Doha base followed by Abu Dhabi. The road show concluded in Muscat.

“Qatar Airways is delighted to be adding yet another U.S. city to our international network. Houston is a very strategic route for Qatar Airways, as it opens up increased bilateral business opportunities for the energy sectors in the Middle East and the oil-producing southern states of America,” said Al Rais, Qatar Airways Executive Vice-President Commercial.

“There exist very close ties between the Arab business community and energy companies in the Gulf with those in and around the Houston area, and we look forward to establishing new air links between these vitally important global energy economies.

“As part of Qatar Airways’ marketing activities revolving around each new route launch, it is integral to communicate directly with travel partners, industry peers and influential members of the wider community in order to raise awareness of both the destination and the exceptional features Qatar Airways offers.”

The new Houston link will be the Qatar national carrier’s first foray into the southern United States, connecting two significant global energy centers. Houston will compliment Qatar Airways’ popular existing U.S. routes to New York and Washington DC, launched in mid-2007. The airline currently offers daily non-stop flights between Doha and both New York’s JFK International Airport and Washington Dulles.

The airline will fly daily to Houston’s George Bush International Airport offering flexibility and convenience to business and leisure travelers flying to Houston and beyond. The Boeing 777-200 Long Range aircraft will offer a two-class configuration of 42 seats in Business Class. Passengers will be able to enjoy comfortable and spacious seats offering a pitch of up to 78 inches with each seat converting into 180-degree full flat beds.

With a 2–2–2 seating configuration, Business Class passengers are assured of either a window or aisle seat and plenty of space.

In Economy Class, seat space is above the industry average with a pitch of up to 34 inches offering significant leg room, while the 217 seats in a 3–3–3 configuration is the most spacious of any airline flying to Houston.

Offering a superb experience in all class categories, Qatar Airways is renowned for its internationally acclaimed Five Star service, superior cuisine and on-board entertainment options, additionally earning the credit of being the first Middle East carrier to provide fully flat beds in business class to Houston.

Regardless of class of travel, passengers can enjoy the next generation interactive in-flight entertainment onboard with a choice of more than 700 audio and video on demand options. From music, documentaries, movies, sport, comedy, children's programmes and interactive games, passengers are rest assured of a great choice of entertainment.

#### **Notes to Editors:**

Qatar Airways will operate a fleet of 110 aircraft by 2013 – almost double the existing size. Qatar Airways has ordered 80 Airbus A350s, 60 Boeing 787s and 32 Boeing 777s, with deliveries of the latter having started in November 2007. The airline is one of the customers of the twin-deck Airbus A380 'super jumbos' with five on order and scheduled for delivery from 2012. At the Farnborough Air Show in July, the airline also ordered six Airbus A321s. Qatar Airways is due to move to the New Doha International Airport in 2011 when the first phase of the new facility is scheduled to open. For more information, visit [www.ndiaproject.com](http://www.ndiaproject.com)

The award winning Five Star airline was recently recognised as the world's Leading Business Class airline at the World Travel Awards. Qatar Airways is one of only six airlines in the world with a Five Star ranking for service and excellence awarded by Skytrax, the independent aviation industry monitoring agency. Skytrax also named Qatar Airways' cabin crew as Best in the Middle East for the sixth year running in 2008 and the airline was voted Best in the Middle East for the third year in a row following a survey of more than 15 million passengers worldwide. For more information, log onto [www.qatarairways.com](http://www.qatarairways.com)

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