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Mohamed Alabbar's Case for Dubai: Why the City Holds When the Region Shakes

Emaar founder Mohamed Alabbar has made the case for Dubai's structural resilience amid ongoing regional tensions, pointing to 200,000+ transactions in 2025 and 26% year-on-year growth in the first half of that year as evidence ...

HIGH	8.2	13 April 2026	7/10
INVESTOR IMPACT	SIGNIFICANCE SCORE	EVENT DATE	SOURCE RELIABILITY

Bradley James
Associate Director & Senior Investment Advisor

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Mohamed Alabbar's Case for Dubai: Why the City Holds When the Region Shakes

Regional geopolitical noise is a recurring feature of the Middle East investment environment. What Emaar founder Mohamed Alabbar is pointing to, and what the 2025 transaction data appears to confirm, is that Dubai's fundamentals have been stress-tested by this environment before and have continued to perform through it. More than 200,000 transactions were recorded in 2025, with 26% year-on-year growth in the first half of that year alone. 6,700 new millionaires relocated to Dubai during 2024. More supply is entering the market in 2026. Each of these data points individually tells a partial story. Together they describe a market in which demand is being met, capital is arriving, and developers are confident enough to build. The bear case, that supply growth compresses yields and that regional escalation could shift sentiment sharply, deserves serious weight. But the structural case, rooted in tax efficiency, residency incentives, political neutrality, and a diversified economy, has not changed. This piece examines what these signals mean for investors thinking about capital preservation over a multi-year horizon.

- Dubai recorded more than 200,000 real estate transactions in 2025, with 26% year-on-year growth in H1 2025.
- 6,700 new millionaires relocated to Dubai in 2024, indicating sustained high-net-worth capital inflows.
- New supply entering the market in 2026 reflects developer confidence, but investors should monitor yield impact carefully.
- Dubai's political neutrality, tax efficiency, and residency incentives continue to differentiate it from competing global cities.
- Small, temporary dips in transaction volume tend to occur when regional news intensifies, but have not altered the longer trend.

- Alabbar's public positioning reflects Emaar's own pipeline commitments, meaning this is not neutral commentary.

THE EVENT

02 What happened, and why it matters

WHAT HAPPENED

Mohamed Alabbar, founder of Emaar Properties, has publicly addressed concerns about Dubai real estate in the context of regional tensions, arguing that the city's structural advantages remain intact. His comments come against a backdrop of more than 200,000 real estate transactions completed in 2025 and 26% year-on-year growth in the first half of that year. 6,700 new millionaires relocated to Dubai in 2024. In 2026, new supply is continuing to enter the market. Alabbar's argument rests on the foundations that built Dubai's status as a global business hub in the first place: steady governance, large-scale infrastructure delivery, investor-friendly regulation, physical safety, political neutrality, and a diversified economy that is no longer solely dependent on oil. The city has a stated ambition to rank among the top 3 global cities by 2033.

WHY IT MATTERS

When the founder of the largest listed developer in the region makes a public case for resilience during a period of geopolitical stress, investors pay attention. The question is always whether the statement is analytical or promotional. Here it is both, and that distinction matters. Alabbar has a financial interest in sustained buyer confidence. But the data he is pointing to, transaction volumes, millionaire inflows, supply growth, is independently verifiable and consistent with a market that has not buckled under regional pressure. For investors weighing whether Dubai belongs in a long-term wealth preservation portfolio, the more important question is not whether Alabbar is right today but whether the structural case holds across a full cycle. The combination of tax efficiency, residency-linked ownership, genuine global connectivity, and a legal framework that protects foreign capital makes Dubai structurally different from most markets where investors are comparing it.

WHO IT AFFECTS

This debate directly affects anyone currently holding, or considering, Dubai real estate as a wealth preservation or income-generating asset. That includes UK-based investors weighing Dubai against a domestic market under tax pressure, high-net-worth individuals exploring the residency and tax planning dimension of property ownership, and existing off-plan buyers whose projects are being delivered into a 2026 market with more supply than previous years. It also affects developers and agents, because if Alabbar's narrative shapes buyer sentiment, it sustains demand for new launches at a moment when the market needs it.

INVESTOR READ

03 Implications, risks and opportunities

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Dubai's position as a regional safe haven for capital is not a recent development. The city built its status through sustained infrastructure investment, governance consistency, and deliberate policy choices designed to attract foreign business and residency. That positioning has been tested repeatedly by regional events over the years, and transaction data from 2025 suggests the pattern of resilience has held through the current period of tension. The 2033 top-3-global-city target represents a continuation of this long-standing strategic posture rather than a new direction.

IMPLICATIONS

The 200,000+ transaction figure and 26% H1 2025 growth rate establish a strong baseline, but baseline figures do not guarantee forward performance. Investors need to separate the macro signal from the asset-specific question. A market performing at record volume overall can still contain individual assets, specific towers, specific developers, specific locations, that underperform because of supply concentration or misaligned pricing. The 6,700 millionaire relocations in 2024 matter because this cohort typically seeks quality, not just availability, and their presence supports the prime and super-prime segments more than mid-market. The supply increase in 2026 is the variable that requires the most attention. Supply growth is healthy when it reflects genuine demand. It creates pressure when it outpaces absorption. Investors should be tracking handover schedules in their specific districts rather than relying on city-wide averages.

RISKS

The honest bear case here has several components. First, Alabbar's statement is not neutral analysis. It comes from the founder of Emaar, a company with a very large pipeline of projects to sell. Investors should read his public commentary alongside the data, not instead of independent analysis. Second, supply growth in 2026 is a genuine yield compression risk. When more units enter any market simultaneously, rental competition increases and the income case for ownership weakens in the near term. Third, while Dubai has historically shown resilience to regional volatility, history does not guarantee future behaviour. A significant escalation in regional conflict could shift sentiment faster than transaction data captures, leaving investors who bought at peak pricing exposed before they can exit. Fourth, the top-3-global-city-by-2033 ambition is a policy target, not a guaranteed outcome. Investors should not underwrite returns based on aspirational government positioning. Fifth, short-term dips in transaction volume during periods of regional news intensity are acknowledged even in Alabbar's own framing. For investors with shorter hold periods or liquidity needs, those dips matter more than the long-run average.

OPPORTUNITIES

The structural opportunity remains what it has been for the past several years. Dubai offers a combination of asset protection features, tax efficiency, residency rights linked to property ownership, and genuine global connectivity, that few cities can match simultaneously. The millionaire inflow data suggests the prime segment has a sustained demand base. For investors focused on generational wealth, the residency dimension is particularly relevant: property ownership creates a pathway to a legal presence in a zero income tax, zero capital gains tax jurisdiction. The 2033 top-3-city ambition, whether or not it is fully achieved, describes a governance posture that is actively competing for global capital. Infrastructure investment, regulatory clarity, and physical safety are not incidental. They are deliberate strategic choices that create a durable foundation for property values over time.

WHAT TO WATCH

Track 2026 handover volumes by district to assess where supply pressure is actually concentrating. Watch for any shift in the millionaire inflow data for 2025, which will confirm or challenge the 2024 trend. Monitor whether transaction volume in H2 2025 and early 2026 sustains the pace set in H1 2025, or whether the growth rate is beginning to normalise. Pay close attention to how rental yields in high-supply areas move as new inventory is absorbed.

THE BOTTOM LINE

04 What this means for Dubai investors

THE MEANING

For anyone holding or considering Dubai property as part of a long-term wealth structure, the Alabbar commentary is less significant than the underlying data it references. More than 200,000 transactions in 2025 and 26% growth in the first half of the year are real signals. 6,700 high-net-worth relocations in 2024 are a real demand driver for the premium end of the market. What you need to hold alongside that is an honest assessment of where supply is increasing in 2026 and whether your specific asset is positioned in a district that can absorb it. The city-wide narrative is useful context. Your investment lives at the asset level, not the headline level.

> “*Here's the thing about a statement like this. When one of the most powerful developers on the planet tells you the market is fine, you don't dismiss it and you don't just accept it. You ask what's behind it. And in this case, the data does broadly support what Alabbar is saying. 200,000+ transactions in 2025. 26% growth in the first half of the year. 6,700 millionaires relocating to Dubai in 2024. That's not spin, that's a functioning market. But be straight with you, he's not a neutral commentator. Emaar has a pipeline to sell. His job is partly to maintain buyer confidence. So I read the data independently of who's presenting it. What I'm actually watching right now is the supply side in 2026. More inventory entering the market is, on balance, a healthy sign of developer confidence. But it puts downside pressure on yields in specific pockets, and that's the conversation I'm having with people who are trying to work out whether their specific project, in their specific area, is well-positioned for the handover cycle they're about to enter. The macro story holds. The asset-level story is where the real work is.*
>
> BRADLEY JAMES, DUBAI REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT ADVISOR

SOURCES AND VERIFICATION

M&M Real Estate Insights, 13 April 2026: "Emaar Founder Mohamed Alabbar on Why Dubai Real Estate Remains Resilient Amid Regional Tensions" (https://www.mandmrealestate.ae/news-and-insights/dubai-real-estate-resilience-2026/). M&M Real Estate Insights, "Emaar Founder Mohamed Alabbar on Why Dubai Real Estate Remains Resilient Amid Regional Tensions", published 13 April 2026, https://www.mandmrealestate.ae/news-and-insights/dubai-real-estate-resilience-2026/

Begin the conversation.

Every allocation starts with a candid, numbers-first discussion shaped around your mandate, risk profile and timeline.

Bradley James

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR & SENIOR INVESTMENT ADVISOR

Bradley James is an Associate Director and Senior Investment Advisor based in Dubai, specialising in Dubai real estate, off-plan investment, strategic wealth allocation, portfolio diversification, and relocation and residency planning. He advises private investors and family offices on entering the Dubai market with the same rigour he applies to his own capital.

SPECIALISMS

- Dubai Real Estate
- Off-Plan Investment
- Strategic Wealth Allocation
- Portfolio Diversification
- Relocation & Residency Planning

WHATSAPP

+971 56 500 6162

INSTAGRAM

@braddjames

WEB

bradleyjames.website

LOCATION

Dubai, U.A.E.

SOURCES

M&M Real Estate Insights, 13 April 2026: "Emaar Founder Mohamed Alabbar on Why Dubai Real Estate Remains Resilient Amid Regional Tensions" (https://www.mandmrealestate.ae/news-and-

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