

## RESEARCHERS AND POLICYMAKERS EXPLORE WAYS TO PRESERVE ARAB FAMILIES DURING CONFLICT ON FINAL DAY OF DIFI CONFERENCE

*Conference Highlighted Commitment to Influencing Existing Public Policies and Future Research*

**Doha, Qatar, 18 October 2016:** The final day of the Doha International Family Institute (DIFI) Conference on Family Research and Policy shed light on numerous topics relating to the breakdown of the family structure as a result of wars and conflicts.

Leading local and international researchers and policymakers examined the most effective means of preserving the family unit during times of instability and civil unrest, the experience and changing role of NGOs in war zones, post-war family transition and resettlement of refugees in the region.

Azza Abdelmoneium, Senior Associate Researcher, DIFI, focused on the plight of internally displaced children in Khartoum in Sudan during the 'Impact of Wars and Conflicts on Women, Men and Children' parallel session. "These children are displaced due to several reasons including migration, breakdown of families, conflicts and natural disasters, and are then forced to work under very harsh conditions and are subject to many forms of violence from their employers."

"Only through raising awareness of these issues, and through further research and education, can we hope to influence and inform future policies to protect the rights of children in conflict areas," Abdelmoneium said.

Delegates from Save the Children, Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development and Amel Association International tackled how the changing nature of both conflict and humanitarian relief has transformed the role of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) from the traditional role of mitigating the effects of conflict into performing new roles, including conflict prevention and peace building efforts.

In the 'Health Consequences of Wars and Conflicts' parallel session, guest speaker Jocelyn DeJong, PhD, American University Beirut, delivered a presentation entitled 'Effects of Conflict on Reproductive, Maternal, Neonatal, and Child Health – A Case Study'. DeJong explored the lack of data in addressing the health challenges in conflict areas while noting how these can be overcome by encouraging collaborations across humanitarian agencies, government bodies and academic institutions.

An interactive session at the end of the conference gave researchers and academics an opportunity to share their experiences, discuss the obstacles they have encountered when conducting research on war and conflict zones, and the best practices to advance their research moving forward.



Witness: 'Syria: No Strings', an Al Jazeera Documentary film, and 'Scenes of War and Conflict: Arab Families in Focus', photos by Al Jazeera, depicted the devastating impact of wars on the family structure and were exhibited during the conference.

Al Jazeera Media Network (AJMN) was DIFI's official media partner for the Second Annual Conference on Family Research and Policy. The partnership was born as a result of their shared focus on human stories and an awareness of the multi-layered impacts that wars and conflicts have on Arab families.

DIFI is a member of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF), and aims to support research programmes and policies to promote the development of Arab families.

### Image Caption

**Image 1:** Panellists of the first plenary session on the final day of the conference, discussing the roles and experiences of nongovernmental organisations during wars and conflicts.

**Image 2:** 'Scenes of War and Conflict: Arab Families in Focus', a collaborative photo exhibition by Doha International Family Institute and Al Jazeera Media Network depicting the on-the-ground reality of wars and conflicts.

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### About Doha International Family Institute (DIFI):

DIFI is a pioneer international organization in the State of Qatar that supports research programs, policies and social outreach to promote the development of Arab families. Focusing primarily on research, DIFI supports a wide range of national, regional and international evidence based studies pertaining to marriage, family building, women, fertility, demographics, children, family safety, child safety, fatherhood and motherhood. DIFI comprises three divisions: family research division, family policy division and social outreach division. DIFI is a member of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development and has a special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (UNECOSOC).

### Qatar Foundation- Unlocking Human Potential:

Qatar Foundation for Education, Science, and Community Development (QF) is a private, non-profit organization that is supporting Qatar on its journey from carbon economy to

knowledge economy by unlocking human potential, for the benefit of not only Qatar, but the world. Founded in 1995 by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Father Emir, QF is chaired by Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser.

QF's strategic mission focuses on education, research, science and community development. World-class universities are brought to Qatar to help create an education sector in which young people can develop the attitudes and skills required for a knowledge economy. At the same time, QF builds Qatar's innovation and technology capacity by developing solutions through key sciences. QF also works to foster a progressive society while enhancing cultural life, protecting Qatar's heritage and addressing immediate social needs in the community. For a complete list of QF's initiatives and projects, please visit: <http://qf.org.qa>

### **Al Jazeera Media Network (AJMN)**

Al Jazeera strives to deliver content that captivates, informs, inspires and entertains. Launched in 1996, Al Jazeera was the first independent news channel in the Arab world dedicated to providing comprehensive news and live debate. It challenged established narratives and gave a global audience an alternative voice—one that put the human being back at the centre of the news agenda—quickly making it one of the world's most influential news networks. Since then, it has added new channels and services, with more than 70 bureaus around the world, while maintaining the independent and pioneering spirit that defined its character. Each subsidiary follows the same principles—values that inspire it to be challenging and bold, and provide a 'voice for the voiceless' in some of the most underreported places on the planet.

