

PRESS RELEASE

HBKU's College of Islamic Studies Co-organizes Second International Conference on the Muslim *Ummah*

Three-day conference explores significant topics facing contemporary Muslim societies worldwide

Hamad Bin Khalifa University's (HBKU) College of Islamic Studies (CIS) recently co-led the Second International Conference on the Muslim *Ummah*, which was held on October 14-16 this year, with leading academics and scholars of their field convening in Istanbul to deliberate, present, and discuss issues of wide-ranging importance and applicability. The conference was organized by the Center of Islam and Global Affairs (CIGA) of Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University (IZU) in cooperation with College of Islamic Studies (CIS), and the Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding (ACMCU) at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.

The three-day conference subscribed to the theme of "Fault Lines and Perils Facing Muslim Societies: The Challenges of Sectarianism, Secularism, Nationalism, and Colonialism." The purpose of the conference centered on debating some of the most significant fault lines impeding the development and progress of Muslim societies today and explored appropriate responses to these challenges. The responses were presented against a backdrop of declining wealth and power, strategic weaknesses, and political disintegration across Muslim-majority countries, posing questions about the challenges that Muslim societies must contend with from a vastly disadvantaged position.

Commenting on the conference's outcomes, Dr. Emad El-Din Shahin, dean of CIS, said: "We value our partnership with IZU, one of the premier centers of Islamic academia, and are proud of our successful collaborations within just one year of our joint efforts. This cooperation will continue to build vital opportunities for academic enrichment, synergetic scholarship, and thought leadership advancement across our specializations in contemporary and applied Islamic Studies."

Dr. Louay Safi, professor of public policy at CIS, represented the college in the conference's opening remarks, where he welcomed participants from diverse academic backgrounds and provided an overview of CIS's catalog of uniquely selected graduate programs. "The conference examined current challenges confronting Muslim societies, and provided a platform to share ideas on possible approaches to address them," Dr. Safi noted.

During the course of the conference, Dr. Joseph Lombard, associate professor of Qur'anic Studies at CIS, as well as Dr. Safi, provided their viewpoints on the session discussing the role of religion in society. Dr. Lombard, from the lens of "Islam and Postmodernity: A View from Traditional Epistemology," argued that many Muslims are complicit in undermining their own traditions, adhering to the sovereignty of modern Euro-American epistemology – they do not use the tools of analysis within the framework of Islamic epistemology.

Dr. Safi presented his viewpoint from the perspective of "Shari`ah and The Nation State: Governance, Law, and Society." He stated that the *Shari`ah* needed to be reframed as a value system and away from its current role as an instrument of the state. He reemphasized the need for collaborative agreement on the application of *Shari`ah* and the necessity of accountability in its use.

The Muslim *Ummah* Conference is one of the several outcomes of the four-year Memorandum of Understanding signed between HBKU-CIS and IZU last year. The partnership aims to facilitate graduate-level education, exchange students and faculties, conduct collaborative research projects, and jointly organize research symposia and conferences.

As one of HBKU's five fast-evolving colleges, CIS is dedicated to the promotion of scholarly discourse and thought-provoking debate. The college's unique positioning in the heart of Education City facilitates the engagement of globally recognized experts and institutions. Since its inception, CIS strives to address issues facing contemporary Muslim societies worldwide by equipping its students through its applied Islamic programs and innovative teaching platforms, and providing its scholars with a rich research ecosystem.

To learn more about CIS and view a listing of the college's upcoming events, visit cis.hbku.edu.qa.

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About Hamad Bin Khalifa University
Innovating Today, Shaping Tomorrow

Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU), a member of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science, and Community Development (QF), was founded in 2010 as a research-intensive university that acts as a catalyst for transformative change in Qatar and the region while having global impact. Located in Education City, HBKU is committed to building and cultivating human capacity through an enriching academic experience, innovative ecosystem, and unique partnerships.

HBKU delivers multidisciplinary undergraduate and graduate programs through its colleges, and provides opportunities for research and scholarship through its institutes and centers. For more information about HBKU, visit www.hbku.edu.qa.