

Thirteenth Doha International Conference for Interfaith Dialogue 2018
Religion and Human Rights
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The right to shelter, education, freedom of thought, freedom of movement, and a fair trial are some of the basic, fundamental human rights for all people. Regardless of language, religion, race, ethnicity, nationality, or any other status, all people are equally entitled to these basic human rights without discrimination. Human rights cannot, and should not, be abrogated in any way by governments, institutions, groups, or other human beings. Instead, human rights should be protected and regarded through their relationship to religious values and religious teachings. This is especially critical in the current environment of untold human suffering due to widespread human rights violations such as human trafficking, injustices, suppression, displacement, war, exclusion, torture, illegal siege, and detentions. The protection of human rights, regardless of religion, sex, race, or religion, is a cardinal pillar in all divine religions, guaranteed by Allah Almighty in Islam, and equal for all people. Allah Almighty granted everyone the right of human dignity, as well as the right to freedom and all other human rights that do not violate His laws.

Upon reviewing the human rights aspects of all manmade laws and civil legislations, which culminate in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights issued by the United Nations in 1948, it is well established that religious legislation for human rights precedes all of these laws. Religious doctrine and teachings stress the importance of complete equality among all people. Additionally, there are many instances in which religious publications condemn those who infringe upon these rights.

In Islam, the Holy Qur'an demonstrates many examples which indicate that all people are created equal and have the right to life. As decreed by Allah Almighty:

"O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women." Chapter (4) sūrat l-nisā (The Women).

Moreover, Allah has honored man without distinction of race, faith, or religion over all other creatures:

"And we have certainly honored the children of Adam and carried them on the land and sea and provided for them of the good things and preferred them over much of what we have created, with [definite] preference." Chapter (17) sūrat l-isrā (The Night Journey)

In Christianity, we also find similar articles in the Bible about human equality:

"For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, and is rich to all who call on him." Romans (10: 12)

There are many religious articles that explore human rights. These articles make clear the aspects of their legislation, provide all provisions for international laws, and commit to protect these rights. This is an affirmation of the religious origin and divine command that preceded manmade laws. This is what followers of all religions should know, and what well-informed people of various religions should clarify to others.

It is from this perspective that the Doha Conference on Interfaith Dialogue convenes for its thirteenth session to emphasize the interdependent relationship between religion and human rights. This relationship is the focal point around which the universe revolves, and acts as the cornerstone of comprehensive humanitarian law.

Additionally, religious teachings have complemented the protection of these rights through addressing all violations in their different manifestations that may act as barriers between man and rights. We have established an equivocal appeal to tackle such phenomena as extremism and terrorism, and to renounce religious intolerance and contempt for other religions.

Many varying aspects of human rights issues from the perspective of religion will be addressed during the 13th Doha International Conference on Interfaith Dialogue following these themes:

Theme 1: Human Rights in Religion (Vision and Concept)

1-1 Freedom of belief and religious practice

Guiding points:

- Ensure freedom of belief and religious practices
- Maintain human dignity and prohibit corruption
- The religious rights of minorities
- Coexistence among followers of different religions

1-2 Individual rights and public interest

Guiding points:

- Personal freedom and community values
- The rights to equality and justice
- Freedom of thought and expression (e.g. media, journalism, social media, authorship)
- The right of litigation and defense
- Freedom of movement and inviolability of residence
- The role of religious teachings in the development of individual social responsibility

1-3 Human political, economic, and social rights

Guiding points:

- The right to political participation
- The right to seek asylum
- Employees' rights and their right to engage in work
- The right to social security (e.g. housing, subsistence, health, education)
- Women's rights (e.g. inheritance, education, work, marriage, divorce)
- Rights of children, families, the senior population, and people with disabilities

Theme II: The Position of Religion on Human Rights Violations

2-1 Religious views on extremism and terrorism

Guiding points:

- The phenomenon of genocide and ethnic cleansing
- Physical assault and intimidation
- Intellectual terrorism and restriction of freedoms

2-2 Religious tolerance and the rejection of religious intolerance

Guiding points:

- Respecting religious sanctities and symbols
- Religious teachings and addressing religious intolerance
- The role of ethical and legal values in the face of religious contempt

2-3 Violation of individual and group freedoms

Guiding points:

- Priority given to military, political, and economic interests over humanitarian factors
- Human rights violations (e.g. murder, displacement, and disposition) in Third World countries
- Racial, religious, and sectarian discrimination, as well as racial superiority
- Imposed disappearances, deportations, and exile
- Human trafficking
- Obstruction of humanitarian work and aid, as well as the threat faced by those supporting it

Theme III: Human Rights Issues between Heavenly Laws and International Covenants

3-1 Religious teachings and the promotion of international human rights laws

Guiding points:

- Religious perspectives on human rights in times of peace and conflict
- The position of heavenly and international laws in relation to the state of siege
- Protection of civilians from the dangers of military operations
- The religious and legal position on victims of wars and conflicts
- Religious outlooks in dealing with war criminals

3-2 Successful experiments to integrate religious values in human rights laws

Guiding points:

- Constitutional legislation obtained from religious laws
- Religious values in human rights laws
- Civil rights associations and their relationships with centers of religious dialogue

3-3 Responsibility of international law in the protection of vulnerable religious groups

Guiding points:

- The protection of religious minorities in international law
- International law and the fight against religious terrorism and ethnic cleansing
- International law and religious anti-discrimination
- Sustainable development laws and poverty reduction
- The right to live in healthy and safe environments