

Symposium

Religion and Human Rights in the Palestinian Draft Constitution:

Lessons Learnt from Experiences of Arab Spring Countries

The Institute of Law, Birzeit University (Conference Hall 243)

20 December 2012

09:00 – 09:30 Registration

09:30 – 10:00 Opening Remarks

Birzeit University

NGO Development Center

The Institute of Law

Samia Haleila

NDC Representative

Jamil Salem

10:00 – 11:15 First Session

Religion and the State: Past and Present

Chair: Islah Jad

This session analyses forms, patterns and tools of integrating religion within the state affairs, particularly through the constitutional text. It assesses how deep would religion penetrate through the state functions. In addition to uncovering “hues of secularism”, participants trace down major phases of the relationship between religion and the state in the world in general, and in the Arab region in specific. In this session, relevant developments are reviewed on a worldwide level, or in certain regions or states, with a view to assessing the influence of said approaches on the enjoyment of human rights.

How Do States Usually Deal with Religion in the Constitution?

Rediscovering Religion and Secularism

Religious Position towards the Constitution of a Civil State

Critique

Discussion

Narmin Siam

Majid Shihadeh

Ali Al-Sartawi

George Giacaman

11:15 – 11:30 Coffee Break

11:30 – 12:45	Second Session <i>Experience of Arab Countries</i>	Chair: Randa Siniora
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Presentations review the current debate in Egypt and Tunisia, including a comparison of pre- and post-revolution constitutional approaches pertaining to religion and state issues. Discussants address results and consequences of various approaches to deconstructing religion and human rights issues in the constitution. Accordingly, opportunities furnished to citizens to enjoy their rights under a variety of scenarios are assessed.

Religion in the Constitution in Arab Spring Countries	Ali Khashan
Problems of Integrating Religion within the Constitution: A Comparative Approach	Mohammed Khader
Problems of Integrating Religion within the Constitution: The Tunisian Experience	Bastien Ballard
Critique	Mudar Kassis
Discussion	

12:45 – 13:00	Coffee Break
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13:00 – 14:15	Third Session Palestinian Experience	Chair: Mustafa Mari
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This session seeks to understand the Palestinian constitutional experience since the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority, assessing whether Palestinians should reconsider how to address issues in question in light of changes the region has been witnessing since early 2011.

How Has the Issue of Religion been Dealt with in the Palestinian Experience?	Jamal al Khatib
How Has the Issue of Religion been Dealt with in the Basic Law?	Emilio Dabed
Entry-points to Addressing Issues of Human Rights and Religion within the Constitution	Reem al Botmeh
Critique	Asem Khalil
Discussion	
Conclusion	Basem Zubeidi

14:15	Lunch
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