



Press Release
**The 14th Doha Conference for Interfaith Dialogue:
“Religions and Hate Speech: Between Scripture and
Practice”
(24-25) May 2022**

His Excellency Prof. Ibrahim bin Saleh Al Naimi, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue, announced the official dates for the 14th International Conference on Interfaith Dialogue in Doha to be held on May 24-25, 2022. In a statement, he said: “The conference was scheduled for March 3 - 4, 2020, but, was postponed due to the conditions of the coronavirus pandemic, and the compromised safety of participants.” He added: “This annual conference is held periodically and is attended by more than 300 personalities from about 70 countries, in addition to participants from the State of Qatar. This conference is the regular academic and discursive forum between thinkers and representatives of the three monotheistic religions (Islam, Christianity, and Judaism), a select group of religious scholars, academics, and leaders of centers of interfaith dialogue from around the world”. He made it clear that hate speech is a violation and undermining of human rights which are among the most important religious and humanitarian issues of today that need to be highlighted and emphasized. Therefore, the aim of this conference is to discuss the problem of hate speech and its dimensions as well as the positions of religions against it and to call for respect, tolerance, and compassion. The conference will be attended by religious scholars, former civil servants, academics, heads of institutions, college professors, college students, charitable institutions, and civil society organizations, as well as representatives of the countries most affected by hate speech.

His Excellency also stated that the fourth Doha **International Award for Interfaith Dialogue** will be presented during the conference. The title and theme of the award were chosen in line with the objectives of this year's conference: ‘**Outstanding Contributions to Spreading the Culture of Moderate Discourse**’. The awardees are selected based on their achievements in spreading the culture of moderate discourse, bringing together people and followers of different religions, and refuting hate speech, incitement, discrimination, racism, extremism, and terrorism. He added that the award is overseen by a special board of trustees made up of Muslim, Christian, and Jewish scholars, as well as officials from the center. The Board of Trustees selects referees from among the best specialists from around the world to serve as reviewers. The Doha International Award for Interfaith Dialogue was launched in 2013 and is a unique initiative of its kind in the field of interfaith dialogue worldwide.

Prof. Al-Naimi also pointed out that the speakers and participants of the conference will focus on the commonalities, and call for a common word between the monotheistic religions, to find a



basis for coexistence for the benefit of humanity in general, away from discussing the ideological issues of each religion. He added: “Respect for the origins of other religions requires us to respect them now, and we invite them to a dialogue that reflects positively on the reality of the followers of different religions inside and outside their countries. The results of this dialogue will lead to a decrease in hatred between the followers of these religions, especially that of hate speech towards Islam and Muslims, and what has become known as Islamophobia or the unjustified fear of Islam and Muslims which plague the Ummah in non-Muslim countries. Addressing these issues are the goals we are striving for and have begun to achieve.

He pointed out that Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue has become a source of pride for every Qatari citizen and every Arab and Muslim, noting that raising these kinds of issues for dialogue with followers of other religions reflects "the progress we have achieved in thought and civilizational philosophy and that the State of Qatar, which is as represented in Doha International for Interfaith Dialogue, believes that nation-building begins with nation-building and that this nation-building is done through cooperation with fellow human beings on the basis of mutual respect, coexistence in harmony and peace, regardless of the different religions, cultures, and races. The Center is the leading institution in Qatar engaged in interfaith and intercultural dialogue, capacity building in the field of dialogue, and working for a culture of peace.

In his statement, His Excellency praised the initiatives of the State of Qatar in the field of dialogue and deliberation between the followers of these religions, as well as Qatar's positive role in issues of dialogue between civilizations and cultures, which has brought Qatar a prominent global position and made it one of the most influential countries in the world in these matters. He added that Qatar, with its wise leadership, is at the forefront of addressing such important issues, is a country that is always in search of peace and harmony, and has many notable contributions and roles in its name.

He added that the continuation of this dialogue in the state of Qatar enriches the pioneering role it plays in this field, especially as it is a multicultural country where many nationalities live, visit or participate in conferences or events it organizes, making the interfaith conferences in Doha another addition to these human dimensions.

Regarding the issues that the conference will address, His Excellency Dr. Ibrahim bin Saleh Al Naimi noted that three axes will be discussed: The first deals with hate speech in terms of causes, motives, and risks. In this context, he said, the extremist religious discourse and its role in the spread of hate speech, the concept of hate speech and the misunderstanding of religion and the promotion of moderate discourse, will be addressed, in addition to the issue of escalation and spread of hate speech, and the extremist discourse of some clerics and political leaders, and its impact on achieving world peace.



He indicated that the second focus, entitled "Patterns and Forms of Hate Speech", will focus on the danger of spreading hate speech, hate speech and incitement to violence and terrorism, the political uses of hate speech and the effects of spreading hate speech and its impact on peaceful coexistence. It will also address the practices of hate speech and their impact, the rise of racism due to hate speech, the escalation of hate speech against refugees and religious minorities, hate speech and discrimination against women.

Dr. Al-Naimi stated that the third focus-of the conference is titled "The Desired Role to Confront Hate Speech" and will address the role of religious and media leaders and institutions in combating hate speech, the responsibility of religious scholars and houses of worship in raising awareness of the need to respect religions, the influence of the media in curbing hate speech, religious and moral values and their role in combating hate speech, and a culture of peace, coexistence and respect for cultural and religious diversity.

He explained that, under the third axis, participants will also discuss the topic of international laws and conventions criminalizing hate speech, clarifying the limits of the application of freedom of expression and the protections of international humanitarian law, and spoke about international conventions, and addressing hate speech, religious and legal frameworks in the face of hate speech, the role of education and educational institutions in addressing hate speech, discussion on the importance of qualifying younger generations to deal with hate speech, addressing hate speech through culture and the arts, and the need to respect diversity and to accept and understand the Other.

When he was asked how the fruits of the dialogue can be transferred from the class of religious scholars and thinkers to the general public, His Excellency Prof. Ibrahim bin Saleh Al-Naimi replied: "Although the conference deals with leading figures and thinkers, its fruits have already migrated from the top-down, embodied in activities, research, conferences, and more. The conference is also attended by many students from universities and colleges in the country, we call on college students to participate in such important conferences."

He emphasized that: "Among the objectives of the conference is to convey to the interlocutors the point of view of the Qatari citizen and the Muslim on the issues raised clarifying an Arab-Islamic vision of Qatar without compromising principles or loyalty at the expense of religion, in addition to explaining the principles of Islam and its call for tolerance, respect and life. And the rejection of hatred and aggression against non-aggressors."

This is what he stated: "The world we all live in today is threatened by two fundamental dangers, the first of which is terrorism, which everyone has agreed to fight and combat, and the second, which is no less dangerous than its predecessor, is summed up in the escalation of hate speech in all its forms and its exclusionary and racist forms that classify people according to their religion, gender or skin color."



Dr. Al-Naimi also elaborated on the commonalities of the monotheistic religions, stressing that all religious texts in the heavenly books call to fight hatred and spread respect and tolerance, but he saw that the practice on the ground shows the opposite, where hatred is practiced in the name of religion. And before that, religions became a means to fight other religions, and hate speech was the first means to do so.

He pointed out that, "the conflicts facing the world today, in which religious intolerance plays the greatest part, where the misunderstanding of the true aims of religion prevails, and the support of this understanding with an authoritarian outlook and practices sustained by religious and national hatred, and the claim of guardianship over the mind, have emerged from extremist models based on misconceptions, prejudices, and false mental perceptions fueled by hate speech and contrary to the idea of dialogue and peaceful coexistence, thus fanning the flames of conflict between civilizations.

He also pointed out that Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue has called more than once, in its conferences and on many occasions, to develop a strategy to counter the religious, legal, and moral threat of hate speech, that is increasing around us and intensifying its negative effects; The Center believes that there is no other way to confront this discourse than to confront its origin and purify its roots, by dialogue with thought, and trying every way to expose the misdirection inherent in calls for sectarianism and racism and rejection of the Other.