

Symposium on Gender, Family, and Marital Relationships among Arab Refugee  
Families in Canada  
Friday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018, 8:30-4:00 PM  
Queen Victoria Hall, Double-Tree by Hilton, London, Ontario

Statement by DIFI Executive Director,  
Ms. Noor Al-Malki Al-Jehani

Good morning,  
Honorable Minister Deborah Matthews,  
Mr. Mayor Matt Brown,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear Friends,

As the Executive Director of the Doha International Family Institute (DIFI), it gives me great pleasure to welcome you to today's Symposium on Gender, Family, and Marital Relationships among Arab Refugee Families in Canada.

I would like to express our sincerest appreciation for your presence here with us today as we discuss the findings of DIFI's research project on "Pre and Post Migration Stressors and Marital Relations among Arab Refugee Families in Canada".

This project was initiated by DIFI in 2016 in response to growing humanitarian crises in the Arab region and served as an acknowledgment of the havoc that war and conflict continue to wreak on refugee families. By spearheading this study, DIFI aimed to contribute to the expansion of the knowledge base on Arab refugees, which despite representing 58 percent of the world's refugees are an often ignored and understudied segment of the population.

Also, we endeavor to shed light on the ongoing traumatic effects that wars and conflicts have on Arab refugee families to develop a deeper understanding of how experiences of separation, danger, destruction, and suffering continue to leave their mark on these families even after their resettlement.



Indeed, the impact of these experiences on the wellbeing, integrity and stability of Arab refugee families is undeniable. Hence, we at the Doha International Family Institute, a member of Qatar Foundation, were pleased to work on this study with the Muslim Resource Centre for Social Support and Integration, the University of Guelph, and the University of Calgary as it is our hope that as reliable research on these matters increases so also will the availability of policies and programs that address the needs of Arab refugee families.

Indeed, DIFI's commitment to enhancing the wellbeing of Arab refugee families includes a number of past initiatives and does not end today. Not only did DIFI organize an International Conference focusing on "Wars, Conflicts and their Impacts on Arab Families" in 2016, where researchers and policymakers discussed the impact of wars and conflicts on Arab families and the role of policy in promoting the well-being and protection of such families, but DIFI also championed the plight of Arab refugee families at the United Nations at the beginning of this very month.

During the Commission on Social Development in early February, 2018, DIFI was pleased to host a side event on "Supporting families affected by wars and conflicts" in collaboration with Qatar Red Crescent Society, Qatar Charity, Education Above All, and the Permanent Mission of the State of Qatar to the UN. There, we highlighted the critical role that non-governmental organizations play in providing support and assistance to families affected by wars and conflicts and provided a venue for NGOS in Qatar to share their experiences supporting this vulnerable population.

In closing, as we embark on today's journey to explore pre and post migration stressors and their impact on marital relations among Arab refugee families in Canada, I would like to thank you for your time and hope that the findings shared here will allow us to further understand the challenges facing Arab refugee families in Canada and identify ways to mitigate the effects of these challenges on their wellbeing and integration.