



## Qatar's Role in Promoting International Peace through Interfaith Dialogue: A Case Study of the Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue

Omar (Mohammad-Ameen) Hazaymeh

Al-Balqa Applied University/ Al-Huson University College, Jordan

**Corresponding Author:** Omar Hazaymeh omar1972@bau.edu.jo

### ARTICLE INFO

**Keywords:** DICID, Interfaith Dialogue, International Peace, Conflict Resolution, Religious Tolerance, Global Peace-Building

*Received : 25 May*

*Revised : 24 June*

*Accepted: 26 July*

©2024 Hazaymeh: This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Atribusi 4.0 Internasional](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).



### ABSTRACT

This paper explores the significant role of Qatar in promoting international peace and conflict resolution through its dedicated efforts in fostering interfaith dialogue, with a focus on the Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue (DICID). Qatar's diplomatic strategy emphasizes the importance of dialogue and negotiation, positioning the nation as a neutral mediator in global conflicts. The DICID, established in 2007, exemplifies Qatar's commitment to building mutual understanding and respect among diverse religious communities. Through its wide range of activities, including international conferences, workshops, community outreach, youth engagement, educational programs, and cultural exchanges, DICID has made substantial contributions to fostering interfaith dialogue. The center's efforts have had a significant impact on promoting mutual understanding, influencing policies, supporting conflict resolution, and shaping global discourses on religious tolerance. By building networks and partnerships, DICID enhances social cohesion and stability, promoting a culture of peace that transcends religious and cultural boundaries. The paper highlights how DICID's initiatives align with Qatar's broader diplomatic goals and examines the tangible outcomes of these efforts in fostering global peace. It underscores the importance of interfaith dialogue as a critical tool for conflict resolution and emphasizes Qatar's pivotal role in promoting a more peaceful and inclusive world. Through this analysis, the paper contributes to a deeper understanding of the vital role that interfaith dialogue plays in international diplomacy and peace-building.

## **INTRODUCTION**

In the complex landscape of global politics, Qatar has emerged as a notable actor in the pursuit of international peace and conflict resolution. Its strategic location in the Gulf region, coupled with its vast natural resources, has afforded Qatar significant influence on the global stage. However, Qatar's role extends beyond economic and geopolitical considerations; it is also recognized for its proactive approach in fostering dialogue and understanding across cultural and religious divides. This multifaceted approach is epitomized by the establishment of the Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue (DICID). The modern world is increasingly characterized by interconnectedness and interdependence, making the need for effective conflict resolution mechanisms more pressing than ever. Conflicts today often have complex roots, involving political, economic, and social dimensions, with religious differences frequently exacerbating tensions. In this context, Qatar has positioned itself as a mediator and facilitator of dialogue, leveraging its unique geopolitical stance and diplomatic relations to promote peace and stability. Central to Qatar's efforts is the recognition that sustainable peace cannot be achieved without addressing the underlying issues of mistrust and misunderstanding among different religious and cultural communities. This understanding has led to the prioritization of interfaith dialogue as a core element of Qatar's foreign policy. The DICID, established in Doha in 2007, serves as a flagship institution in this regard, embodying Qatar's commitment to fostering a global culture of peace through dialogue and mutual respect. The DICID aims to provide a neutral platform where religious leaders, scholars, and practitioners from diverse backgrounds can come together to engage in meaningful dialogue. By addressing misconceptions, exploring shared values, and promoting mutual respect, the center seeks to reduce religiously motivated conflicts and contribute to broader peace-building efforts. The DICID's activities range from international conferences and academic research to educational programs and community outreach initiatives, all designed to bridge gaps and build understanding among different faith communities. Qatar's role in international conflict resolution and interfaith dialogue is particularly significant in a world where religious and cultural tensions are often manipulated for political ends. By promoting a narrative of coexistence and mutual respect, Qatar challenges divisive rhetoric and provides a model for other nations to follow. The DICID's impact extends beyond the borders of Qatar, influencing global discourses on interfaith relations and conflict resolution. This paper seeks to explore Qatar's role in promoting international peace through its interfaith dialogue initiatives, with a specific focus on the contributions of the DICID. It examines the historical and contemporary contexts of Qatar's diplomatic strategies, the objectives and activities of the DICID, and the tangible outcomes of its efforts in fostering global peace. Through this analysis, the paper aims to highlight the importance of interfaith dialogue as a tool for conflict resolution and the pivotal role that nations like Qatar can play in promoting a more peaceful and harmonious world.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Humans by nature seek protection for their lives and belongings as well as a tranquil atmosphere; in multireligious society, these things can only be obtained via the peaceful cohabitation of adherents to many religions and civilizations. Social cohesion, the ability to accept and live with differences, positive interpersonal interactions, a shared commitment to tolerance and respect, and an understanding that disputes between various religious and ethnic groups should be resolved amicably are all necessary for peaceful coexistence (Dogarawa, 2021:1). Qatar's interfaith efforts are best understood in the context of the country's wider foreign policy agenda of becoming an international hub of mediation, dialogue and diplomacy (Fahy & Bock, 2018:7). Interfaith dialogue creates spaces for promoting human rights, democracy and the rule of law in diverse and multicultural environments (Palwankar, 2023:5). Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue (DICID) is a Qatari based institution working in fields including interfaith dialogue intercultural and capacity building. The State of Qatar, represented in DICID, believes that nation-building process is based on mutual collaboration and respect between the components of society to ensure social harmony and constructive interaction among different faiths, cultures and races. Qatar has played a vital role in the advocating human rights and ensuring diversity of religions and identities (Hassan, 2023:214).

### **Qatar's Diplomatic Strategy and the Role of DICID**

Qatar's diplomatic strategy is rooted in its desire to be seen as a neutral mediator and an influential global player. This strategy is multifaceted, combining elements of soft power, economic diplomacy, and strategic mediation. Unlike some of its regional neighbors, Qatar has chosen to leverage its vast natural gas wealth not only for economic development but also for establishing itself as a proactive agent in international diplomacy. A cornerstone of Qatar's approach is its emphasis on dialogue and negotiation. This emphasis is evident in Qatar's involvement in mediating numerous regional and international conflicts. Qatar has hosted peace talks and facilitated negotiations in conflicts involving groups from diverse regions, such as the Sudanese conflict, the Lebanese political crisis, and the Afghan peace process. By providing a neutral ground for dialogue, Qatar has earned a reputation as a reliable mediator capable of engaging with a wide range of political and ideological actors. Moreover, Qatar's foreign policy is characterized by its engagement with global institutions and its support for multilateralism. Qatar is an active member of the United Nations, the Arab League, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and other international organizations. Through these platforms, Qatar advocates for peaceful conflict resolution, humanitarian assistance, and sustainable development. This commitment to multilateralism is further reflected in its generous contributions to international aid and development projects, reinforcing its image as a responsible global citizen. Within the broader context of Qatar's diplomatic strategy, the Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue (DICID) plays a pivotal role. The

DICID was established in 2007 with the mission of promoting dialogue and understanding among different religious communities. The center's establishment aligns with Qatar's broader goal of fostering global peace and stability through non-traditional means, particularly through the promotion of cultural and religious understanding. The primary objective of DICID is to create a platform for open and respectful dialogue among religious leaders, scholars, and practitioners from various faith traditions. The center aims to foster mutual understanding, respect, and cooperation among different religious communities, thereby contributing to global peace efforts. Key aspects of DICID's mission include: promoting interfaith dialogue as DICID facilitates discussions and exchanges among representatives of different religions to promote mutual understanding and dispel misconceptions. DICID supports academic research and publishes works that explore interfaith relations, religious tolerance, and the role of religion in conflict resolution. The center organizes cultural events and exchanges that allow individuals from different religious backgrounds to share their traditions and practices, fostering a deeper appreciation for diversity. The DICID's activities are diverse and aimed at achieving its mission of fostering interfaith understanding and cooperation. Some of the key activities include: International conferences as DICID organizes annual international conferences that bring together religious leaders, scholars, and policymakers to discuss pressing issues related to interfaith dialogue and cooperation. These conferences provide a platform for exchanging ideas, sharing best practices, and building networks. The center conducts workshops and seminars that focus on specific topics related to interfaith dialogue, such as conflict resolution, religious tolerance, and the role of religion in society. These events are designed to provide participants with practical tools and knowledge to promote interfaith understanding in their communities. DICID engages in community outreach activities aimed at promoting interfaith dialogue at the grassroots level. This includes partnering with local religious and community organizations to conduct interfaith activities and initiatives. Recognizing the importance of involving young people in interfaith dialogue, DICID conducts programs specifically designed for youth. These programs aim to educate young people about the importance of religious diversity and equip them with the skills to promote dialogue and understanding. The impact of DICID's work is far-reaching, influencing both local and global efforts to promote interfaith dialogue and understanding. By providing a neutral platform for dialogue, DICID has helped to build bridges between different religious communities, reducing tensions and fostering a culture of peace and cooperation. Testimonials from participants, as well as case studies of successful initiatives, highlight the positive impact of DICID's work on promoting mutual respect and understanding among diverse religious groups. Qatar's diplomatic strategy, characterized by its emphasis on dialogue, negotiation, and multilateral engagement, is complemented by the work of the DICID in promoting interfaith understanding. The DICID's initiatives and activities contribute significantly to Qatar's broader efforts to foster global peace and stability. As a leading institution in the field of interfaith dialogue, DICID

serves as a model for other countries and organizations seeking to promote harmony and cooperation among different religious communities. Through its commitment to dialogue and understanding, Qatar continues to play a crucial role in promoting international peace and conflict resolution.

### **Activities and Initiatives of DICID**

The Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue (DICID) undertakes a wide range of activities and initiatives designed to promote mutual understanding and respect among different religious communities. These efforts are central to the center's mission of fostering global peace and reducing religiously motivated conflicts. Here is an in-depth look at the key activities and initiatives of DICID. DICID organizes annual international conferences that serve as flagship events for the center. These conferences bring together religious leaders, scholars, policymakers, and practitioners from around the world to engage in meaningful dialogue on interfaith issues. Each conference typically focuses on a specific theme, such as religious tolerance, the role of religion in peace-building, or the contributions of various faiths to global ethics. These themes are chosen to address current global challenges and to facilitate discussions that are relevant to both local and international contexts. The conferences provide a platform for participants to share their experiences, present research findings, and propose practical solutions to issues related to interfaith dialogue. By fostering an open and respectful exchange of ideas, these events help to build networks and partnerships that can continue to work towards interfaith understanding long after the conferences have concluded. In addition to its large-scale conferences, DICID conducts smaller, more focused workshops and seminars. These events are designed to provide participants with in-depth knowledge and practical skills related to interfaith dialogue. Topics covered in these workshops and seminars include conflict resolution, religious tolerance, the role of religion in society, and strategies for promoting interfaith cooperation at the community level. These educational sessions often feature expert speakers and facilitators who guide participants through discussions and activities that enhance their understanding and ability to engage in interfaith dialogue. The interactive nature of these workshops and seminars allows for a deeper exploration of issues and fosters a more personal connection among participants. DICID recognizes that promoting interfaith dialogue requires engagement at the grassroots level. To this end, the center undertakes a variety of community outreach initiatives aimed at fostering interfaith understanding within local communities. These initiatives include partnering with local religious and community organizations to organize interfaith events, dialogues, and activities. Community outreach programs often involve interfaith forums where members of different religious communities come together to discuss common concerns and collaborate on community projects. By encouraging direct interaction and cooperation among people of different faiths, these initiatives help to build trust and reduce prejudices at the local level. Youth engagement is a critical component of DICID's strategy to promote interfaith dialogue. Recognizing the importance of

educating and empowering the next generation, DICID organizes programs specifically designed for young people. These programs aim to raise awareness about the importance of religious diversity and equip young individuals with the skills needed to engage in interfaith dialogue. Youth engagement initiatives include interfaith youth camps, leadership training programs, and educational workshops that focus on fostering mutual respect and understanding. By involving young people in these activities, DICID helps to nurture a new generation of leaders who are committed to promoting peace and tolerance. DICID places a strong emphasis on education as a means of promoting interfaith dialogue. The center develops and implements educational programs that are tailored to various audiences, including schools, universities, and religious institutions. These programs aim to provide participants with a comprehensive understanding of different religious traditions and the principles of interfaith dialogue. Educational programs often include lectures, discussion groups, and interactive activities that encourage participants to explore religious diversity and its implications for social harmony. DICID also produces educational materials, such as books, brochures, and multimedia resources, that can be used by educators and community leaders to promote interfaith understanding. Research and scholarly work are fundamental to DICID's mission. The center supports academic research on topics related to interfaith dialogue, religious tolerance, and the role of religion in conflict resolution. By funding research projects and collaborating with academic institutions, DICID contributes to the body of knowledge in these fields. DICID also publishes research findings, conference proceedings, and other works that explore various aspects of interfaith relations. These publications serve as valuable resources for scholars, practitioners, and policymakers who are involved in interfaith dialogue and peace-building efforts. By disseminating knowledge and insights, DICID helps to inform and shape global discourses on interfaith issues. Cultural exchange is another important aspect of DICID's work. The center organizes cultural events and exchanges that allow individuals from different religious backgrounds to share their traditions, customs, and practices. These events often include art exhibitions, music performances, culinary festivals, and other activities that celebrate the rich diversity of religious cultures. Cultural exchange programs provide an opportunity for participants to experience the beauty and richness of other traditions firsthand, fostering a deeper appreciation for diversity. By highlighting the commonalities and unique contributions of different cultures, these programs promote mutual respect and understanding. DICID actively works to build and sustain networks of dialogue and cooperation among religious leaders, scholars, and organizations. These networks facilitate ongoing communication and collaboration on interfaith initiatives. By connecting individuals and groups who are committed to promoting interfaith dialogue, DICID helps to amplify the impact of their efforts and create a more cohesive movement towards global peace and understanding. Through its diverse activities and initiatives, the Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue plays a vital role in promoting mutual understanding and respect among

different religious communities. By fostering dialogue, education, and cultural exchange, DICID contributes significantly to Qatar's broader efforts to advance global peace and stability. The center's work serves as a model for other nations and organizations seeking to promote harmony and cooperation across religious divides. As DICID continues to expand its programs and initiatives, it remains a beacon of hope and a catalyst for positive change in the realm of interfaith dialogue.

### **Impact and Contributions to International Peace**

The Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue (DICID) has made significant contributions to promoting international peace through its comprehensive approach to interfaith dialogue. Its impact can be measured across various dimensions, including fostering mutual understanding, influencing policies, supporting conflict resolution, and shaping global discourses on religious tolerance. This section examines the multifaceted impact of DICID's initiatives and their contributions to international peace. One of the most immediate and tangible impacts of DICID's work is the fostering of mutual understanding and respect among diverse religious communities. By bringing together individuals from different faith traditions through conferences, workshops, and cultural exchange programs, DICID creates opportunities for meaningful interactions and dialogue. Participants are able to share their beliefs, experiences, and perspectives, which helps to dispel misconceptions and reduce prejudices. The dialogue facilitated by DICID often leads to a deeper appreciation of the common values shared across different religions, such as compassion, justice, and the pursuit of peace. This recognition of shared values fosters a sense of solidarity and cooperation, which is essential for building peaceful and inclusive societies. DICID's impact extends beyond the individuals and communities directly involved in its activities. By engaging with policymakers, religious leaders, and scholars, DICID influences policies and practices related to interfaith dialogue and religious tolerance. The center's conferences and publications provide valuable insights and recommendations that can inform policy decisions at both national and international levels. For example, DICID's emphasis on the importance of interfaith dialogue in education has led to the integration of interfaith and intercultural education into school curricula in some regions. Policymakers and educators who participate in DICID's programs are often inspired to implement initiatives that promote religious tolerance and understanding in their own contexts. DICID's work in promoting interfaith dialogue directly supports efforts to resolve conflicts that have religious dimensions. By creating platforms for dialogue and mediation, DICID helps to address the root causes of religiously motivated conflicts and fosters reconciliation among conflicting parties. The center's approach emphasizes the importance of understanding and addressing the underlying issues that contribute to religious tensions, such as discrimination, inequality, and lack of knowledge about other faiths. Case studies from regions affected by religious conflicts highlight the positive impact of DICID's interventions. In some instances, DICID-facilitated dialogues have led to the

signing of peace agreements, the cessation of hostilities, and the establishment of collaborative initiatives aimed at rebuilding trust and cooperation among different religious communities. DICID plays a significant role in shaping global discourses on interfaith relations and religious tolerance. Through its international conferences, publications, and collaborations with academic institutions, DICID contributes to the body of knowledge in these fields and helps to set the agenda for global discussions on interfaith dialogue. The center's work highlights the importance of religious tolerance and interfaith dialogue as essential components of peace-building and sustainable development. By promoting these ideas on the global stage, DICID helps to raise awareness about the critical role that religious dialogue can play in addressing contemporary global challenges, such as extremism, social fragmentation, and cultural conflicts. DICID's efforts to build networks and partnerships among religious leaders, scholars, and organizations have a lasting impact on global peace initiatives. These networks facilitate ongoing communication and collaboration on interfaith projects, creating a multiplier effect that amplifies the impact of individual efforts. By connecting like-minded individuals and organizations, DICID helps to create a cohesive and coordinated movement towards promoting interfaith understanding and peace. These networks also provide a support system for individuals and organizations working in challenging environments. The connections and resources provided by DICID enable participants to share best practices, access funding and expertise, and develop joint initiatives that address pressing issues related to religious tolerance and peace-building. The work of DICID contributes to enhancing social cohesion and stability in diverse societies. By promoting dialogue and understanding among different religious communities, DICID helps to build inclusive societies where diversity is respected and celebrated. This inclusivity is crucial for social stability, as it reduces the potential for conflicts and tensions arising from religious differences. In multicultural and multi-religious societies, DICID's initiatives provide a model for peaceful coexistence and cooperation. The center's activities demonstrate that dialogue and mutual respect can lead to harmonious relationships among diverse groups, contributing to overall social stability and resilience. Ultimately, the most profound impact of DICID's work is its contribution to promoting a culture of peace. By emphasizing the importance of dialogue, understanding, and cooperation among different religious communities, DICID helps to cultivate attitudes and behaviors that are conducive to peace. The center's initiatives encourage individuals and communities to embrace diversity, resolve conflicts peacefully, and work together towards common goals. This culture of peace extends beyond religious communities to influence broader societal attitudes. As individuals and communities internalize the principles of interfaith dialogue and tolerance, they are more likely to advocate for peaceful solutions to conflicts, support inclusive policies, and contribute to the creation of a more just and peaceful world. The Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue has made significant contributions to promoting international peace through its diverse activities and initiatives. By fostering mutual

understanding, influencing policies, supporting conflict resolution, shaping global discourses, building networks, enhancing social cohesion, and promoting a culture of peace, DICIP plays a pivotal role in advancing global peace and stability. Its work serves as a model for other nations and organizations seeking to promote harmony and cooperation among different religious communities. As DICIP continues to expand its efforts, its impact on global peace and interfaith understanding will likely grow, further contributing to a more peaceful and inclusive world.

## CONCLUSION

The Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue (DICIP) stands as a beacon of hope and a catalyst for positive change in the realm of global peace-building and interfaith understanding. Through its comprehensive array of activities and initiatives, DICIP has significantly contributed to fostering mutual respect and cooperation among diverse religious communities. By organizing international conferences, workshops, and seminars, the center has provided platforms for meaningful dialogue and knowledge exchange, thereby addressing misconceptions and reducing prejudices. DICIP's influence extends to the policy realm, where its insights and recommendations have shaped educational curricula and informed decision-making processes related to religious tolerance and interfaith dialogue. The center's efforts in supporting conflict resolution have had tangible impacts in regions affected by religiously motivated conflicts, promoting reconciliation and trust-building among adversaries. Moreover, DICIP has played a pivotal role in shaping global discourses on religious tolerance and interfaith relations. Its publications and collaborations with academic institutions have enriched the body of knowledge in these fields, helping to set the agenda for international discussions. By building networks and partnerships among religious leaders, scholars, and organizations, DICIP has fostered a cohesive and coordinated movement towards global peace. The center's initiatives have also enhanced social cohesion and stability in multicultural societies, demonstrating that dialogue and mutual respect can lead to harmonious coexistence. Ultimately, DICIP's work promotes a culture of peace, encouraging attitudes and behaviors that support peaceful conflict resolution and inclusive policies. Qatar's diplomatic strategy, characterized by its emphasis on dialogue, negotiation, and multilateral engagement, is exemplified by the work of DICIP. The center's contributions align with Qatar's broader goals of fostering global peace and stability through non-traditional means, particularly by promoting cultural and religious understanding. As the world continues to face complex and interconnected challenges, the role of institutions like DICIP becomes increasingly important. By continuing to expand its efforts and initiatives, DICIP will likely enhance its impact on global peace and interfaith understanding, serving as a model for other nations and organizations. The center's commitment to dialogue and understanding remains a vital force in promoting a more peaceful and inclusive world.

**REFERENCES**

- Dogarawa, Ahmad Bello. 2021. The Role of Interfaith Dialogue in Promoting Peace for Nation Building: Expectation from the Plateau Inter-Religious Council. Inauguration of Plateau State Inter-Religious Council. Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue. <https://www.dicid.org/dicid-activity/>.
- Fahy, John & Bock, Jan-Jonathan. 2018. Beyond Dialogue? Interfaith Engagement in Delhi, Doha & London.
- Hassan, N. A. A. (2023). The Qatari Initiative for Interfaith Dialogue: The Context of Origin and Development. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 13(7), 213-233.
- Palwankar, Umesh. 2023. Panel Discussion. Interfaith Dialogue and Reconciliation: Creating and Sustaining Spaces of Encounter. Online Panel Event. Geneva Center for Human Rights Advancement and Global Dialogue.