



Afternoon Talks on Islamic Law

Wednesday, 1 July 2020 – 2 pm (CET)

Virtual Panel Discussion

**"Covid-19: implications for the application
of family law in MENA countries"**

Speakers:

Archimandrite Dr. Bassam Shahatit

President of the Greek Catholic Court of First Instance, Amman –
A Jordanian perspective

Somoud Damiri

Chief prosecutor for personal status at the Sharia Court, Palestine,
and judge of the Sharia Court of Appeal, Ramallah –
A Palestinian perspective

Discussant:

Dr. Dörthe Engelcke

Research Group on Family and Succession Law in Islamic Countries,
Max Planck Institute

Moderator:

Priv.-Doz. Dr. Nadjma Yassari

Research Group on Family and Succession Law in Islamic Countries,
Max Planck Institute



We are happy to announce, that *Archimandrite Dr. Bassam Shahatit*, president of the Greek Catholic Court of First Instance in Amman, and *Somoud Damiri*, chief prosecutor for personal status at the Sharia Court, Palestine, and judge of the Sharia Court of Appeal in Ramallah, will be joining us in our series Afternoon Talks on Islamic Law to share and discuss the implications of the Covid-19 pandemic for the application of family law in their respective countries.

Background: Family laws establish men as providers and partly hamper women's mobility and access to the labour market. Amidst the Covid-19 crisis, courts in some Middle Eastern countries have closed down, making it very difficult for women to file for maintenance or to have court decisions enforced. At the same time, the crisis has had negative effects on men too. Due to exacerbated economic conditions, it has become increasingly difficult for men to fulfil their role as breadwinners. Some states have responded creatively to the shutdown of the judiciary by resorting to technological means. For example, in order to facilitate women's access to maintenance, payments can be made electronically and courts are holding sessions online. In fact, the further digitalization of the court system in many MENA countries is one of the obvious results of the Covid-19 crisis. Further, in some countries prisoners who had been arrested for failure to provide maintenance have been released from custody due to fears that the Corona virus would spread in prisons. This again has had an impact on maintenance payments as women are now deprived of a powerful instrument for the enforcement of court decisions. Finally, since the outbreak of the pandemic, figures indicate a rise in early marriages as a means to escape economic hardship.

Questions we want to address:

- To what extent has Covid-19 impacted existing family law norms?
- To what extent have procedures changed as a result of the COVID-19 crisis?
- What measures have states taken to advance the digitalization of court procedures and what impact have these measures had on the involved parties?
- Do we see differences when it comes to digitalization efforts among different courts (church courts, sharia courts)?

The virtual panel discussion will be held as a video conference via Zoom. After having registered by email, you will receive the login details one day before the event. Please confirm upon registration that you agree to the use of Zoom and that you will not record the event. However, the event may be recorded and made accessible by us on our homepage afterwards. By attending the event you confirm that you have read and agree to be bound by Zoom's Terms of Service and Privacy Policy.

If you would like to attend, please register for the virtual panel discussion by sending an email no later than 29 June 2020 to veranstaltungen@mpipriv.de.