



Call for Papers for the Conference
Minority Law in Arab States: Governing Religious Diversity
Organized by the Arab German Young Academy of Sciences and Humanities (AGYA)
and
the Centre of Expertise for the Law of Arab and Islamic Countries
at the
Max Planck Institute for Comparative and International Private Law, Hamburg,
Germany
14-15 July 2025

Arab states have adopted diverse approaches and employed varied strategies to institutionalize family laws and govern religious diversity often granting religious communities a great degree of legal autonomy. These approaches are shaped by historical, social, and political contexts, reflecting the complex interplay between law, religion, and governance.

Compared to Muslim communities, the laws governing religious minorities in Arab states have received little scholarly attention, despite their prevalence, impact, and reform efforts, which they are subject to. In many Arab states, religious communities exercise autonomy in family and inheritance law, allowing their religious leadership to directly shape the rights—and the lack thereof—of their members. Minorities are also disproportionately affected by conflict which exacerbates family law-related issues such as inheritance and property rights.

This conference foregrounds the complex interplay between legal autonomy and the governance of religious diversity. Our aim is to convene scholars employing different methodological and theoretical approaches (especially from law, anthropology, political science, history, Middle Eastern studies) together with legal practitioners and policymakers.

We invite submissions that address particularly, but not exclusively:

1. Legal pluralism,
2. Minority responses to the governance of religious diversity,
3. Gender and inter-religious relationships,
4. The impact of conflict on family laws,
5. International law, institutions, and advocacy,
6. Local, national, and regional policy and reform perspectives.

Paper Submission: Papers should be based on original, unpublished research. We welcome contributions from scholars of all stages of their career. Please send the abstract of your proposed paper (up to 300 words) by **March 24, 2025** to Ms. Tess Chemnitzer (chemnitzer@mpipriv.de). Notifications will be sent out by March 31, 2025. A collection of articles based on workshop contributions will be submitted to a leading journal for publication in a special issue.



Organization: The conference is being organized by the *Arab German Young Academy of Sciences and Humanities (AGYA)* and the *Centre of Expertise for the Law of Arab and Islamic Countries* at the Max Planck Institute for Comparative and International Private Law in Hamburg, Germany. As part of an AGYA Tandem Project of AGYA members Dörthe Engelcke (Max Planck Institute for Comparative and International Private Law, Germany) and Mohammad Al-Saidi (Hamad Bin Khalifa University, Qatar), the conference will take place in Hamburg, Germany, on 14-15 July 2025.

Funding: We will provide funding for all presenters (travel costs and accommodation). Funding is still subject to approval.

About the Arab-German Young Academy of Sciences and Humanities (AGYA): The Arab-German Young Academy of Sciences and Humanities (AGYA) is based at the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities (BBAW) and at the Academy of Scientific Research and Technology (ASRT) in Egypt. It was established in 2013 as the first bilateral young academy worldwide. AGYA promotes research cooperation among outstanding early-career researchers (3–10 years post-PhD) from all disciplines who are affiliated with a research institution in Germany or in any Arab country.

The academy effectively supports the interdisciplinary projects and transdisciplinary initiatives of its members in various fields of scientific research, science policy and education. AGYA is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and various Arab and German cooperation partners.

More information: www.agya.info

About the Centre of Expertise for the Law of Arab and Islamic Countries: The Centre of Expertise for the Law of Arab and Islamic Countries is based at the Max Planck Institute for Comparative and International Private Law in Hamburg, Germany. Dr. Dörthe Engelcke is serving as its acting head. The Institute is one of the 80 research institutes of the Max Planck Society for the Advancement of Science and dedicated to research in the field of foreign and private international law on a worldwide basis.

The Centre of Expertise comparatively studies family and inheritance law in Arab and Islamic countries from interdisciplinary and comparative perspectives. The work of the Centre focuses on countries whose family and inheritance law is largely characterized by religious law. In addition to Islamic law, the focus is also on the personal status laws of Christian communities and Kurdish family law. The aim of the Centre is to conduct a long-term academic investigation of the processes of transformation and reform in Arab and Islamic legal systems.

More information: www.mpipriv.de/law-of-arab-and-islamic-countries