

# U.S.-Islamic World Forum منتدى أمريكا والعالم الإسلامي

June 9-11, 2013 • Doha, Qatar



at BROOKINGS



## PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

### Rethinking the 'Red Line':

### The Intersection of Free Speech, Religious Freedom, and Social Change

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1. Due to increasing limitations on freedoms of expression and religion and their impact on social change, when it comes to any discussion of racial, ethnic, and religious intolerance, there are three central actors that must be engaged: media, civil society, and government.

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2. Criminalization is not the most effective or productive means to address religious intolerance. Blasphemy laws, for example, are counterproductive. Moral and social norm setting actions, like public condemnations and social responses, are more effective and productive.

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3. Context matters. The problem of intolerance is not endemic to any one country or context. Any general recommendation has to be heavily caveated because it would have to be "localized" in order to reflect context.

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### **On the Brink:**

### **Preventing Economic Collapse and Promoting Inclusive Growth in Egypt and Tunisia**

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**Continued economic deterioration is a threat to the democratization process.**

**On values:** Governments are encouraged to develop economic reform programs in a transparent way, reaching out to engage the general public – including opposition groups and those with dissenting views. Civil society would play an important role in this process; it is crucial that an enabling legal framework for NGO operations be put in place.

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**On priorities:** The overarching objective is to achieve inclusive growth and greater social justice. This will require action on: (a) macro-economic stabilization (supported by the IMF); (b) an enabling regulatory environment for private sector development and FDI (including political stability and security), with particular emphasis on the SME sector; (c) control of corruption; (d) a special focus on the social sectors including: expanding and ensuring better targeted safety nets, as well as more efficient health and education services; (e) greater economic inclusion of women and efforts to fight discrimination. These priorities need to be implemented within a sustainable medium-term framework, avoiding a return to old practices.

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### **For the international community:**

Successful transitions will require greater financial aid and technical support from the international community in the context of country-owned programs. Areas for action include: (a) better coordination of development partners both within and beyond the Deauville Partnership, including with regional actors (particularly the GCC and Turkey); (b) better aligning of partners' comparative advantages to country needs; (c) encouraging greater South-South cooperation and knowledge sharing, for example in corruption control where the Indonesian experience is useful.

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### **Fostering Synergies in Advancing Women's Rights in Post-Conflict Islamic States: A Focus on Afghanistan, Egypt, and Libya**

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1. Post-conflict settings provide opportunities for advancing women's rights upon a stage where religious identity, cultural norms, and law play an instrumental role in shaping the nature of the discourse.

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2. The most robust and sustainable approach to champion these opportunities must enlist pillars of social change, which will integrate the approaches of: (1) women's political activists; (2) state-oriented legal advocates; (3) informal sector; and (4) Islamic religious leaders.



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3. Harmonizing each of these three pillars with their distinct (and even intertwined) approaches for social change will vary depending on each nation's respective institutional and human development capacities.

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### **Diplomacy and Religion: Seeking Common Interests and Engagement in a Dynamic World**

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1. Calls for increased diplomatic and religious cooperation to support mutual peace and respect of basic human rights within and among religions.

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2. Because of concern over the Iranian nuclear program, calls for the use of the Supreme Leader's fatwa as a potential basis for seeking a solution, in conjunction with other faith-based efforts to support nuclear disarmament.

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3. Calls for leaders of Abrahamic/Ibrahimiic religions to support renewed Middle East peace negotiations toward a two-state solution.