



TONY BLAIR
INSTITUTE
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CHANGE



Peace and Tolerance Education in the Arab World Two Decades After 9/11

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FOREWORD

The devastating September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States are being commemorated this week as a time to reflect on our responses to the continued threat posed by radical Islamist movements. The Anti-Defamation League and the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change have joined together to produce a pioneering joint study assessing one of the principal intellectual aspects of this effort: education reform.

This joint report, based on detailed and painstaking research, is an unprecedented and comprehensive survey of education reform in the Arab world since 9/11. It documents the extensive calls for such reforms from Arab activists and leaders, as well as from the international community, after 9/11. And it explains how the region's uneven progress in this area over the past two decades can offer a roadmap for addressing remaining content that contributes to hate and violence.

There is an assumption in the West that Middle Eastern governments have done little to endorse the principle of stemming violent extremism, but "Peace and Tolerance Education in the Arab World Two Decades after 9/11" shows that this is untrue and unfair. Beginning with the first Arab Human Development Report in 2002, the need for educational reform was recognized by Arab thought leaders as a critical step for boosting development, stability, and inclusion, all of which can help combat the extremism that has destabilized the Muslim world and cost thousands of Muslim and non-Muslim lives.

As the report argues, the region's progress in education reform has been incomplete but important nonetheless. Textbooks throughout the region are now teaching that tolerance is a fundamental Islamic value, an ethos

that provides an opening for other reforms in practice. The report assembles positive examples of passages from Arabic textbooks today that model teaching peace and tolerance in practice, such as lessons that address the common origins of our faith traditions, the inclusion and rights of religious minorities, peaceful interpretations of Islamic thinking, and the importance of respect for others and interfaith dialogue.

While there has been commendable progress, there is much room for improvement in what regional youth are exposed to. In nearly every country of the Middle East, government-published textbooks include some inaccurate and hateful messages about non-Islamic faiths and minority Muslim traditions. Some of this content is unambiguously and unacceptably antisemitic. Other problematic educational content includes the continuation of antagonistic and harmful “clash of civilisations” narratives, conspiracy theories, polemical imagery, and in some cases content that may encourage terrorism, especially but not exclusively against Israelis. These materials often sit uncomfortably alongside and contradict the more progressive inclusions above.

One year on from the Abraham Accords and the historic warm peace between Israel and four additional Arab nations, this is surely the time to underpin people-to-people engagement with informed and tolerant education, heralding a new generation of Jewish-Muslim collaboration in the spirit of, for example, medieval Andalusia. The nurturing of a new generation liberated from the hateful thinking of the past can give rise to our strongest champions for prosperity and region-wide peace.

No country’s system of education is perfect, and working together we can continue the progress made over the past two decades. Our report recommends constructive steps forward, such as including accurate information about minority Muslim and global faith traditions, replacing civilisational antagonism with international cooperation, condemning and counteracting non-state actors from disseminating incitement to violence, and entrenching pluralistic thinking and human rights education.

But as this report also demonstrates, incorporating such content into state-published textbooks in the Arab world is a serious test of political will. Technical support may help, but it can only go so far unless government

leaders within the region are willing to challenge prevailing narratives, teach accurate world history, and champion a pluralism that includes everybody, even those internal and external minority groups that may be controversial.

No one is born our enemy, and hate is not innate but taught. The people of the Arab world are as desirous and deserving of peace and tolerance as those in any other region. As millions of children and youth return to the classroom for the first time in many months following the Covid-19 pandemic, this is an opportunity to accelerate efforts toward education reform prompted by the tragedy of 9/11.

As the 9/11 Commission Report noted in 2004, “education that teaches tolerance, the dignity and value of each individual, and respect for different beliefs is a key element in any global strategy to eliminate Islamist terrorism.” And as our recently departed dear friend Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks observed, “To be immortal, all you need to do is engrave your values on the minds of your children.” Together, we and the people of the region can ensure the values of peace and tolerance are learned and cherished by every generation to come. And hopefully our new joint report can help.

Rt Hon Tony Blair

Former Prime Minister of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and Executive Chairman of the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change

Jonathan Greenblatt

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Introduction

In the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, one common refrain both in America and around the world was to ask what went wrong. Implicit in this question was the desire to understand not just why those attacks had taken place, but also how best to prevent them from recurring.

One recommendation that emerged from these deliberations was a call for major education reforms, in order to help young people be more resilient when facing recruitment by terrorist groups. For example, the U.S. Government's bipartisan 9/11 Commission Report pointed out "education that teaches tolerance, the dignity and value of each individual, and respect for different beliefs is a key element in any global strategy to eliminate Islamist terrorism."¹

The Commission's report recognized that this struggle for hearts and minds was "likely to be measured in decades, not years."² And today for the first time, we actually find ourselves in that expected timeframe, with two full decades having transpired since 9/11. A person born at the time of those attacks would even be old enough to have graduated from high school. As such, a comprehensive review of those education reform efforts would now be well warranted.

This report is designed to serve as that review, with a particular focus on textbooks in the Arab world. To what extent have Arab governments succeeded since 9/11 at instituting educational reforms that advance peace and tolerance? To what extent have they failed? And what can leaders within and beyond the region do in order to promote future improvements?

One of this report's conclusions is how inconsistent most curricula still are on these urgent issues. There is some positive and innovative content in most countries' textbooks today, yet in many subject areas essential for peace and tolerance, there is still vast room for improvement.

PEACE AND TOLERANCE EDUCATION

Public debates in the years after 9/11 identified two main pathways by which education reform in the broader Middle East can help combat terrorism. One pathway involves technical and scientific curriculum changes in order to boost job creation, as well as to better integrate women into education and, ultimately, the economy. The other pathway involves curriculum changes to shape young peoples' identities and attitudes about the other. Both pathways are important, but this monograph focuses on the latter, which entails its own distinctive challenges.

In principle, teaching coexistence to schoolchildren sounds rather straightforward. Yet as the 2003 Arab Human Development Report pointed out, educational reforms in the humanities, social sciences, and religious studies tend to be particularly sensitive for government authorities in the region and therefore more resistant to change than relatively "neutral" subjects such as science and math.³ For this reason, "such subjects usually laud past achievements and generally indulge in both self-praise and blame of others, with the aim of instilling loyalty."⁴

Similarly, a High-Level Advisory Group to the President of the European Commission called Mideast educational reforms focused on coexistence "the heart of our recommendations, the crux of the whole system."⁵ Yet this group also sounded a note of warning, indicating that "this sort of approach is not easy to implement because it demands a firm political will at the decision-making level" to revisit prevailing narratives in the humanities, social sciences, and religion courses.⁶ This emphasis on political will is especially salient because textbooks are drafted and published directly by national governments in the vast majority of Arab states, and then revised annually.

To illustrate why teaching educational messages of peace and tolerance is so important, one need look no further than the fact-finding sections of the 9/11 Commission Report. In documenting al-Qaeda's worldview and preparations for the 9/11 attacks, the report illustrates how al-Qaeda's leaders, cell members, and rhetoric subscribed to a clash of civilizations narrative emphasizing enmity with Western nations and hateful conspiracy theories toward Jews.

Al-Qaeda's leaders and operatives called for a religious war against "Jews and Crusaders" and subscribed to the idea of a "Jewish world conspiracy" and "a global Jewish movement centered in New York City that supposedly controlled the financial world and the media."⁷ They aspired to conduct attacks aimed at "potential economic and 'Jewish' targets in New York City."⁸ As such, combating such narratives in the educational space may help reduce al-Qaeda's appeal.

The remaining sections of this report are divided into two main parts. The first part shows how, in the aftermath of 9/11, leading figures from government or civil society identified education reforms to promote peace and tolerance as one important means for combating terrorism. This recognition was reflected in the 9/11 Commission Report, the Arab Human Development Reports, from governments and civil society in the Arab world, and from leaders in Europe.

The second part of this report provides a collection of best and worst practices from textbooks in the Arab world today, across five relevant categories of peace and tolerance education. These categories are as follows: (1) teaching comparative religion, (2) directive for how to treat adherents to other religions, (3) clash of civilization narratives, (4) lessons about peace, war, and the concept of jihad, and (5) civics education. Although harmful messages remain common in many of the region's curricula today, positive examples also abound, which this report includes in order to provide a roadmap for future reforms.



Part One: A Shared Vision for Education Reform

THE 9/11 REPORT

The United States government's bipartisan 9/11 Commission Report strongly encouraged educational reforms to promote peace and tolerance as part of the effort against groups such as al-Qaeda. Broadly speaking, the report advised that to "help defeat an ideology," the international community would have to "help moderate Muslims combat extremist ideas."⁹ To achieve that objective, the report advocated for "education that teaches tolerance, the dignity and value of each individual, and respect for different beliefs," calling it "a key element in any global strategy to eliminate Islamist terrorism."¹⁰

The Commission's report raised serious concern that many countries in the broader Middle East had "education systems that generally devoted little if any attention to the rest of the world's thought, history, and culture" and where "education about the outside world, or other cultures, is weak."¹¹ It also raised concerns about the prevalence of "cartoonish stereotypes" that could make peace and tolerance education more challenging, such as when some state media outlets in the region "reinforce the jihadist theme that portrays the United States as anti-Muslim."¹²

The report advised the international community to present young people in the region with a persuasive vision for their futures that "should stress life over death."¹³ It argued that doing so should include "individual educational and economic opportunity" but also "openness in discussing differences, and tolerance for opposing points of view."¹⁴ And while it urged the international community to provide encouragement and support, the report recognized that it would ultimately be up to the region's societies and leaders to "reflect upon such basic issues as the concept of jihad, the position of women, and the place of non-Muslim minorities."¹⁵

ARAB HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORTS

In 2002, a group of scholars and technical experts from the Arab world published the first Arab Human Development Report (AHDR), with the backing of the United Nations. According to the *New York Times*, this project had been in the works for over a year, but 9/11 imbued it with “unexpected new relevance as explanations for Arab anger against the West are being sought.”¹⁶ The report argued that comprehensive development in the region was being held back due to three main deficits: human freedom, knowledge development, and women’s empowerment.¹⁷

The AHDR argued that knowledge is a public good that permeates all areas of development. It warned that the region was facing “a major mismatch” between “the output of educational systems and labour-market needs,” and that the countries of the Arab world “spend a higher percentage of GDP on education than any other developing region.”¹⁸

In addition, the report offered a general message that, “given rising global independence, the most viable response will be one of openness and constructive engagement,” enabling Arab countries to both contribute to and benefit from globalization in additional ways.¹⁹ It also identified “tolerance and respect for different cultures” as priorities that “deserve special emphasis from a human development perspective,” since “respect for other cultures” and greater integration of the region’s minority communities could be mutually beneficial for all sides.²⁰

In 2003, a follow-up AHDR report was published, this time focusing on knowledge development in particular. It noted that several Arab states had already administered educational reform campaigns over the prior decade but that the results were inconsistent according to topic. It found that curriculum changes were less controversial in the sciences, whereas “the humanities and social sciences that have a direct relevance to people’s ideas and convictions are supervised or protected by the authorities.”²¹ Thus, these fields tended to adhere to historical narratives of “self-praise and blame toward others, with the aim of instilling loyalty” to the state.²²

VOICES FROM ARAB COUNTRIES

During the first few years after 9/11, leading voices from Arab governments and civil society expressed support for peace and tolerance education as an important aspect of fighting terrorism. In all four of the wealthy Gulf monarchies, as well as Egypt, Jordan, and Morocco, activists and government officials noted the urgency of such efforts and advocated for pursuing them.

Saudi Arabia took on special salience in this regard, as the former home of Osama bin Laden and a majority of the 9/11 hijackers. In December 2001, the Saudi-owned newspaper *Asharq al-Awsat* published a letter from a Saudi doctor named Sahr Hatem expressing her concern that “each one of us entered school when we were young and our mentality was programmed” to believe “every non-Muslim is our enemy.” That “the West means degeneracy, disintegration, and amorality,” and that “good values and ideals are ours alone.”²³

Just over a year later, the Saudi Embassy in Washington announced that efforts were underway to “eliminate” any “possibly offensive language” from government school textbooks, but insisted this sort of content was actually quite rare because “our schools... teach peace and tolerance.”²⁴

One of the papers presented at the Kingdom’s National Dialogue in 2003 under the sponsorship of Crown Prince Abdullah focused on this issue. Co-authored by Saudi journalist Ibrahim al-Sakran and former Saudi judge Abdulaziz al-Qassem, the paper reportedly concluded that the Saudi middle school and high school curriculum for religious studies “encourages violence toward others, and misguides the pupils into believing that in order to safeguard their own religion, they must violently repress and even physically eliminate the other.”²⁵ And in 2004, the Riyadh bureau chief of Saudi Arabia’s *Arab News*, Raid Qusti, asked “have we helped create these monsters? Our education system, which does not stress tolerance of other faiths – let alone tolerance of followers of other Islamic schools of thoughts – is one thing that needs to be re-evaluated from top to bottom.”²⁶

In 2005, Saudi Arabia hosted a 50-nation summit on terrorism including every major Arab government except for Libya. Its closing statement called for confronting not just “the spread of violence” but also “deviant ideas.” It noted “the role of the mass media, civil institutions and educational systems in forging strategies to confront terrorist allegations,” and it called for “enhancing the values of understanding, tolerance, dialogue... rejecting any clash of civilizations, and combating any ideology that calls for hatred.”²⁷ And in 2006, the Saudi government pledged to “remove remaining intolerant references” from its textbooks “that disparage Muslims or non-Muslims or that promote hatred toward other religions or religious groups” in one to two years.²⁸

Of course, other countries were also quite important to this effort. Al-Qaeda's second-in-command, Ayman al-Zawahiri, came originally from Egypt. So did Mohammad Atta, the ringleader of the 9/11 hijackers. As the most populous Arab country, Egypt had long been investing in education development, even dubbing the 1990s "the decade for education reform."²⁹ However, the Mubarak government's efforts had been focused more on education enrollment than the content of the curriculum, and its response to an Islamist uprising from 1992 to 1997 had ceded substantial authority over social and education issues to local fundamentalists.³⁰

Following 9/11, Egypt's Education Ministry reportedly "developed and distributed curricular materials instructing teachers in government schools to discuss and promote tolerance in teaching."³¹ And in 2003, Chairman Moustafa Elfeki of Egypt's House Foreign Affairs Committee told reporters that whether or not Washington was pushing for education reforms, "change has become inescapable, beginning from the retrograde educational curricula."³²

Similar recommendations were also voiced by thought leaders in the other wealthy Gulf monarchies as well. Two of the 9/11 hijackers had originally hailed from the United Arab Emirates, and the mastermind of the attack, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, grew up in Kuwait and later lived and worked for several years based out of Qatar during the 1990s.

In early 2002, the Emirati newspaper al-Bayan noted that reasons for revising religious studies curricula in the Arab world included not just economic growth but also learning from other cultures while sustaining Arab values and identities.³³ The dean of Qatar University's Islamic Law program argued in al-Hayat that "we must examine our curriculum" because "the culture of terrorism" stems from "a closed education that leaves no room for pluralism."³⁴

In Kuwait, a cabinet minister described education reform as "a necessity-driven agenda" and that "September 11th crystallized our thoughts."³⁵ Following a local terror attack in 2002, Kuwait's Education Ministry issued a decree calling for revisions to teach "brotherhood, equality, love, caring, mercifulness and coexistence," because of concern about "religion textbooks describing jihad as mandatory war on non-Muslims and Israel as the religious enemy of all Muslims."³⁶

Emirati officials initially focused on education reform efforts at the local level, for example launching the Abu Dhabi Education Council in 2005. And their federal Minister of Education emphasized “how the education of young people can help promote values such as peace, truth, and non-violence” and “incorporate these universal human values” in everyday life.³⁷

Yet Qatar garnered plaudits for the most ambitious reform program at the time, hiring the RAND Corporation to fully revise its curricula in four course subjects. The Washington Post suggested that Qatar was striving to become a “model state” for the region with outside technical expertise, and Qatari nationals involved in the project lauded it as “a revolution” and “a total earthquake.”³⁸

The disproportionate number of Moroccan citizens involved in international terrorist attacks led the Moroccan American scholar Dr. Abdeslam Maghraoui to ask whether the country’s educational system was a contributing factor. Maghraoui wrote that “school textbooks are full of harsh and confrontational religious references (such as jihad, ridda, kuffar, ghazw, etc), as if Islam were essentially a religion of war and hatred. There is hardly any positive mention of other monotheistic religions, and no attempt to address Morocco’s pre-Islamic history.”³⁹

When Arab governments and the G-8 launched an annual “Forum for the Future” to support domestic reforms as a way of fighting terror, Morocco hosted the first summit in 2004. That summit’s closing statement said “the Participants reaffirmed their determination to pursue education reforms” based on “enlightenment, modernity, tolerance and good citizenship.”⁴⁰ And they agreed to hold an education summit in Jordan that would discuss upgrading curricula.⁴¹

That education summit was hosted by Jordan in 2005, where officials from countries such as Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Mauritania, Morocco, and Yemen shared their perspectives and experiences from pursuing education reforms.⁴² Jordanian officials presented their own experiences implementing the Jordan Education Initiative since 2003, a partnership with foreign governments and corporations aimed at “holistic educational change policy,” including revised electronic curricula in civics, math, science, and language courses.⁴³

Several weeks before that summit, Jordan's finance minister testified to the U.S. Congress, explaining that education reform was important for Jordan's fight against terrorism, not just by creating more job opportunities but also by combating "hatred, bigotry, and violence."⁴⁴

Jordan also organized an interfaith declaration in 2004 known as the Amman Message, which is still taught in Jordan's curriculum today as one – at least rhetorical – basis for teaching tolerance.

EUROPEAN SUPPORT

According to the European Commission, one of its primary actions for responding to 9/11 was a Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference that it hosted in April 2002 in Valencia.⁴⁵ At that convening, 27 governments agreed in principle to create a Euro-Mediterranean Foundation that would focus on civilization dialogue by engaging youth, education, and the media.

The High-Level Advisory Group reporting to the President of the European Commission to help make this foundation a reality recommended in 2003 that its mission should include efforts to "make education a vehicle for learning about diversity and transmitting knowledge of the Other," not least through "reworking syllabuses to provide comparative teaching of religions and cultures."⁴⁶ The Advisory Group explained that this should aim at European and Arab partnerships for "redefining the foundations of the humanities and social sciences and the way they are taught, as regards the anthropological, legal, cultural, religious, economic and social dimensions of the history of the Mediterranean."⁴⁷

The Advisory Group insisted that "education is at the heart of our recommendations, the crux of the whole system, without which there is no point to the dialogue because there will be no participants, no partners," and that success would also require "the teaching of comparative religion... with the objectivity of an expert, not the passion of a devotee."⁴⁸ The foundation was chartered in 2004 as the Anna Lindh Foundation and soon began operations in Alexandria.

When the Bush Administration sought to enlist the G-8 to facilitate reforms across the broader Middle East in 2004, European governments were crucial in making that happen. And education ministers from the United Kingdom and France each attended the 2005 summit in Jordan.

Later that year when the U.N. Security Council passed a resolution focused on next steps for fighting terrorism, the U.K. drafted and championed it. The resolution's text stressed "the role of the media, civil and religious society, the business community and educational institutions in those efforts to enhance dialogue and broaden understanding, and in promoting tolerance and coexistence."⁴⁹ It called on all states to "counter incitement of terrorist acts motivated by extremism and intolerance and to prevent the subversion of educational, cultural, and religious institutions by terrorists and their supporters."⁵⁰

Prime Minister Tony Blair underlined this message in his statement on the United Nations vote. He proclaimed to the assembled delegations that terrorism will not be defeated "until we unite not just in condemning the acts of terrorism, which we all do, but in fighting the poisonous propaganda that the root cause of this terrorism somehow lies with us."⁵¹ Blair explained that the "root cause" of international terrorism "is a doctrine of fanaticism, and we must unite to uproot it... taking action against those who incite, preach, or teach this extremism."⁵²

Part Two: Assessing the Outcomes of Education Reform

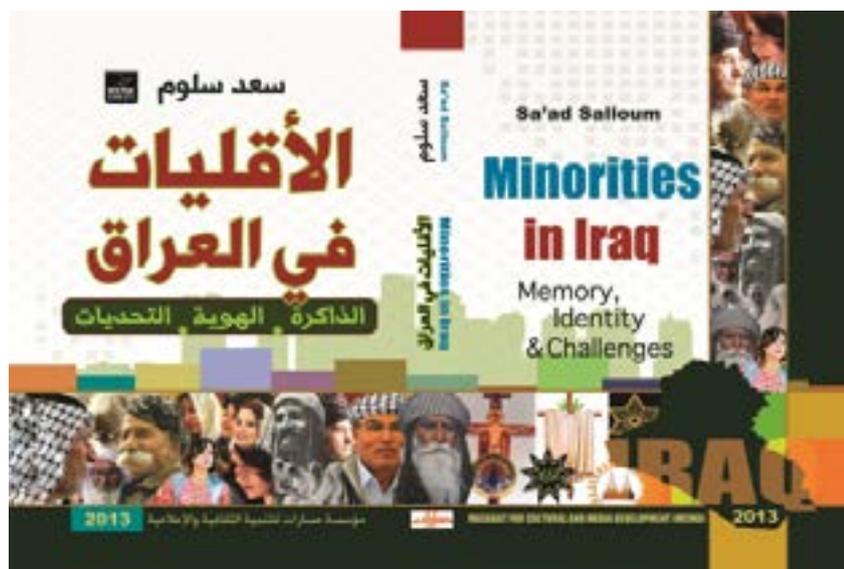
Despite widespread calls after 9/11 to promote peace and tolerance education as a means for fighting terrorism, textbook passages that could contribute to hate and violence against the other – especially the perceived external other – are still disconcertingly prevalent in the Middle East today. As such, the remainder of this report will highlight examples of both harmful as well as positive educational passages, across five relevant categories of peace and tolerance education. By doing so, this report illustrates the magnitude of the remaining challenges and demonstrates how constructive school lessons from across the region can help chart a path for the years ahead.

TEACHING COMPARATIVE RELIGION

The 2003 report that helped launch the Anna Lindh Foundation for Euro-Mediterranean dialogue called for more school lessons in the region for teaching comparative religion, “with the objectivity of an expert, not the passion of a devotee,” so that dialogue can proceed from a basis of accurate information about the other.⁵³ Nearly a decade later, the foundation published a Guidebook for History Textbooks Authors in partnership with the Arab League and UNESCO, which suggested this need still remained: “when we analyze the image of Europeans, Christians, and Jews, in Arab-Islamic textbooks... these religions are sometimes presented from the point of view of the Quran’s prescriptions and Islamic ethics and values” instead of an empirical frame.⁵⁴

Indeed, inaccurate school lessons about other faiths remain common in the Arab world today. However, there is also a fair amount of variation in this regard, even within most curricula. Revising inaccurate passages and addressing areas where basic material is lacking could each be important steps for ensuring that students gain a solid understanding about world religions. In this regard, educators can rely on a variety of existing guides for best practices, including the OSCE’s 2007 Toledo Guiding Principles on Teaching about Religions and Beliefs in Public Schools and the 2019 Abu Dhabi Guidelines on Teaching Interfaith Tolerance.⁵⁵

A book from the Iraqi organization Masarat, which has commissioned curriculum inserts on understudied religious groups such as Baha'is, Mandaeans, Yazidis, Christians, and Jews⁵⁶



Christianity and Judaism

Take for example a 12th grade Islamic Issues textbook by Kuwait's Ministry of Education. It states that Jesus taught "pure monotheism" but that Christianity has been "perverted" ever since the years after his death. This text singles out Paul the Apostle for blame, calling him "a Jew by origin fighting Christians and persecuting them" who then "invoked Christianity and began to propagate the perverted Christianity."⁵⁷ The book also declares that present-day Christians are not monotheists, warning that any Muslim who converts to Christianity "has converted from worshipping the one and only God to polytheist worship and deviancy, represented by the doctrine of the Trinity."⁵⁸

Some texts present a mix of factual information and outright falsehoods. Qatar's 11th grade Islamic Studies textbook for spring 2021 correctly teaches that major denominations of Christianity include Catholicism, Protestantism, and Orthodoxy, but it goes on to identify the main denominations of Judaism as extremist Pharisees, rejectionist Sadducees, and aggressive Zealots, a framework that is both pejorative and two millennia out of date.⁵⁹ It also teaches that Jews were originally monotheists and People of the Book, but that Judaism quickly deviated from those precepts, taking up idol worship, proclaiming Ezra the son of God, believing in amoral materialism, and considering the Torah less important than the Talmud.⁶⁰

Other misleading references to the Talmud are also quite common. For example, Jordan's curriculum sometimes refers to Judaism in general terms as one of three "heavenly" or "divine" monotheistic religions, but when it comes to politically contentious textbook lessons about Jerusalem, Jordan's curriculum negatively refers to Jewish religious practices as "Talmudic rituals."⁶¹ Today it is also far more common for textbooks to outright reject any Jewish religious or historical connection to Jerusalem as a fabrication⁶² than to find a book teaching otherwise.⁶³

On a positive note, Bahrain's 5th grade Social Studies textbook refers positively to the presence of monotheistic religions in Arabia before Islam's founding, including those Arabs who embraced Christianity or Judaism.⁶⁴ The book also notes with pride that all three Abrahamic faiths trace their origins to the Middle East, calling it the "cradle of the three divine religions,"⁶⁵ a formulation that is also presented in Kuwait's 7th grade Social Studies courses.⁶⁶

And yet textbooks from both these countries teach the slanderous claim that Judaism strives for world domination. A Bahraini textbook dated 2020 and downloaded from Ministry of Education's website in July 2021 teaches that a reason Jews are hated is "their seeking to control the world, due to their belief they are... 'God's chosen people'."⁶⁷ Kuwait's 8th grade Islamic Studies textbook for Spring 2020 lists supposed "examples of Jewish hostility to Muslims," such as seeking "to destroy religious principles" and "control of the global economy."⁶⁸

East and South Asian Religions

Less recognized is the fact that referring to only these three faiths as "heavenly" or "divine" is normative, not empirical, terminology and inherently derogatory to other religions. South and East Asian religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, and Shintoism are rarely discussed in Mideast textbooks today, although millions of their adherents live and work in Arab states.

One positive reference comes from the UAE's 10th grade textbook for Moral Education, which mentions the presence of Hindu and Sikh temples in the country as an indicator of its diversity.⁶⁹ However, the UAE's fall 2020 textbook in English for 7th grade Social Studies on South Asia appears to teach the region's history without a single reference to Hinduism.⁷⁰

Islamic Sects and Offshoots

In some Arab countries, school lessons about Shiite Islam are either insufficient relative to societal needs or include content that is intolerant and potentially inflammatory. For example, Saudi textbooks for the 2020-21 school year are still replete with negative references to what are commonly perceived as Shiite or Sufi Muslim religious practices as examples of “polytheism.”⁷¹

Fortunately, more appropriate references can also be found, either of an explicit or implicit nature. For example, Bahrain’s 2nd grade Social Studies textbook refers in general to the country’s mixed population of both Shiite and Sunni citizens, describing them all as brothers with other Muslims around the world, because each one adheres to the same core Islamic tenets such as testifying to God’s unity, praying toward Mecca, traveling on pilgrimage, and fasting for Ramadan.⁷² And Egypt’s state-subsidized K-12 school system administered by the al-Azhar seminary teaches about Sufism in a very complementary manner, describing it as a mystical pledge to purify one’s soul with good morals, abstaining from material indulgences, and engaging in spiritual chants.⁷³

However, when it comes to marginalized religious communities that are more recent offshoots or subgroups of Islam, misinformation in textbooks can be quite problematic. For example, a recent 12th grade Kuwaiti textbook refers to Ahmadi Muslims using the derogatory term “Qadianis” and rejects their preferred identification as a sect of Islam.⁷⁴ The book also teaches that Ahmadi doctrine permits consuming alcohol, pork, and illicit drugs, and that Ahmadis believe all other Muslims to be infidels, even though all these claims are incorrect.⁷⁵

Religious Minorities and National Heritage

Virtually every Arab country has its own unique patchwork of minority religious sects, but formal education about such groups remains far too rare. Notably, the 2012 guidebook for history education from by the Anna Lindh Foundation, the Arab League and UNESCO stated that “it is particularly important that Arab-Islamic textbooks point out the fact that Oriental Christians have been an integral part of Islamic societies since the dawn of Islam” and that it is important to teach about their numerous contributions to national heritage.⁷⁶

Another notable effort of this sort comes from Iraq's Masarat Foundation, a nonprofit that is publishing its own lesson plans on misunderstood Iraqi religious minorities, with the goals of educating young leaders and trying to improve curricula for public schools.⁷⁷ Also of note, ADL commended Morocco in the fall of 2020 for adding several pages its 6th grade textbooks for Social Studies to teach about the Jewish community's contributions to Moroccan heritage.⁷⁸

Graphic from a Moroccan textbook with the caption "His Majesty King Mohamed VI on his visit to the Moroccan Jews' House of Memory in Essaouira"⁷⁹



Recommended Action Steps:

- Teach more about world religions.
- Correct inaccurate lessons about Christian and Jewish doctrine.
- Teach empirically about Islamic sects and offshoots rather than normatively.
- Expand content about the contributions of religious minorities to national heritage.

LESSONS ABOUT HOW TO TREAT OTHER FAITHS

It is now quite common for textbooks across the region to express rhetorical support for tolerance toward different religions. However, curricula frequently still struggle to apply this principle to school lessons about specific contexts or faiths.

Graphic from an Egyptian textbook: “Diversity is the secret of our beauty. Respecting the other is to treat him as you wish to be treated, without consideration to kind or religion or color.”⁸⁰



Interfaith Hostility

For example, the Kuwaiti textbook described earlier above that discusses the Ahmadi faith proclaims in a separate chapter that freedom of religion is a fundamental Islamic value.⁸¹ And yet the textbook also calls for “confrontation” with Ahmadi Islam as well as Baha’ism.⁸² Regarding the Ahmadi faith, the textbook recommends “that Muslims resist it, not interact with it, and not bury their dead in Muslim cemeteries.”⁸³ And regarding Baha’ism, the textbook points the student to a fatwa that “forbids this school, warns against its danger, and the necessity of combating it.”⁸⁴

A decade ago, Saudi textbooks also used to include hostile messages about these two faiths, but those passages have since been excised following external scrutiny.⁸⁵ However, the Saudi curriculum’s recommendations for how to treat non-Muslims and Shia are still quite problematic.

For example, a Saudi high school textbook on Quranic interpretation seems to forbid friendships with non-Muslims, asserting “it is forbidden to be loyal to the infidels while excluding the believers, but that does not mean that it is allowed to oppress or attack them.”⁸⁶ The Kingdom’s high school curriculum on Monotheism teaches that treating non-Muslims justly should not preclude “abhorring and hating disbelief and its people,”⁸⁷ and the lesson goes on to use ambiguous language suggesting non-Muslims and possibly Shia should be treated as combatants except under extenuating conditions such as agreeing to an explicit non-aggression pact.⁸⁸

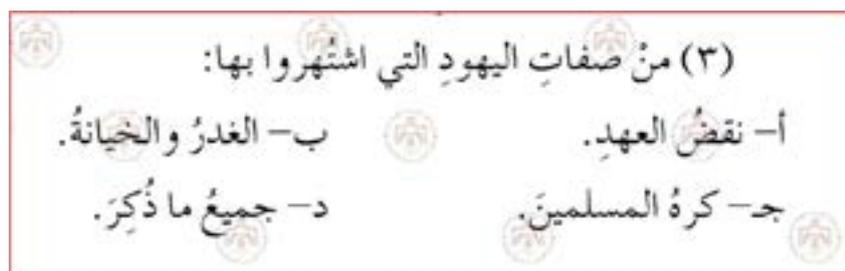
Interfaith Mixed Messages

One positive message in this Saudi textbook that is also cited by Egypt’s public-school curriculum is a hadith that says whoever kills a non-Muslim who has been granted protected status shall be blocked from entering heaven.⁸⁹ It also teaches that the Prophet Muhammad granted citizenship to Christians in southern Arabia, as a possible model for the present day.⁹⁰

Notably, Egypt’s parallel K-12 school system that is run by al-Azhar and subsidized by the state teaches that Islam requires “accepting the other” and “does not sever Muslims’ relations with their compatriots from other religions.”⁹¹ And it highlights a hadith that the Prophet Muhammad stood to show respect for a funeral procession of a deceased Jewish man, explaining “is he not a human soul?”⁹²

Puzzlingly, however, a 2020-21 Azhari textbook on the Fundamentals of Religion teaches “the permissibility of forging pacts” with Christians and Jews, but goes on just four pages later to say “treachery among the Jews is a characteristic that cannot be abandoned.”⁹³ Likewise, ADL documented public-school textbooks in use last academic year by Egypt, Qatar, Jordan, and Kuwait teaching that Jews should be considered inherently treacherous,⁹⁴ which of course substantially undercuts rhetoric about interfaith tolerance in other parts of these curricula.

Quiz from a Jordanian textbook: “Among the characteristics of the Jews for which they are renowned are: (A) the breaking of pacts, (B) treachery and treason, (C) hating Muslims, or (D) all of the above”⁹⁵



Interfaith Solidarity

More positively, the UAE’s 1st grade Social Studies textbook for English speakers presents friendships with non-Muslims as perfectly normal and appropriate. It teaches that “expats have different religions, languages, cultures, and histories,” and it narrates that “Ali lives in a building with lots of other families. He has lots of friends in the building that are expats.”⁹⁶ It goes on to list some of their favorite holidays, including one who says “my favorite holiday is Christmas. We have special Christmas dinner and exchange gifts.”⁹⁷ Such messages would be good to see added to the UAE’s Arabic-language curriculum as well.

In both languages, the UAE’s 9th grade textbooks for Islamic Studies teach that Islam mandates “closening and strengthening the bonds of affection” with Jews and Christians as People of the Book.⁹⁸ And they emphasize a Quranic teaching that one must respect parents even if they try to convert him or her to polytheism.⁹⁹ The country’s 10th grade Moral Education textbook teaches in both Arabic and English that “the only valid criterion for judging man’s merit, regardless of his faith, is his good actions. Being truly religious means fulfilling the true message of your own faith by leading a moral and good life that brings joy, comfort and peace to those around you.”¹⁰⁰

Recommended Action Steps:

- Remove lessons that teach confrontation or exclusion of other faiths.
- Ensure that lessons do not reinforce harmful stereotypes.
- Include additional content teaching solidarity with adherents of other faiths.

CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS NARRATIVES

Because terrorist groups like al-Qaeda depend on a narrative that the Islamic world is under attack, another feature of peace and tolerance education focuses on dispelling that narrative.

The Axis of Resistance

This clash of civilizations theme is often most pronounced in the curricula of Iranian clients in the region. For example, such messages are particularly common in educational materials produced in parts of Lebanon and Yemen by institutions aligned with Hezbollah¹⁰¹ and the Houthis,¹⁰² as well as in public-school textbooks published by the Assad regime in Syria.¹⁰³ Yet such messages are not confined to this bloc.

Colonial History

One area where such messages sometimes occur is in lessons about the history and legacies of Western colonialism. Although such painful topics should by no means be celebrated or downplayed, educators should also exercise care to avoid encouraging enmity in a way that could fuel violent conflict today.

For example, an Algerian History textbook from 2015 that still appears current teaches the 1884-85 Berlin Conference, a turning point for European colonialism, using an inflammatory graphic depicting Europe and America as an octopus and cobra grasping the entire world.¹⁰⁴ Other curricula handle this episode appropriately, giving a strictly factual discussion instead. For example, the UAE's middle school Social Studies curriculum discusses that conference more neutrally, though a more contentious page in its treatment of colonialism uses a bloody graphic to highlight what it calls "the neglected history" of "Ottoman massacres against the Arabs."¹⁰⁵

Graphic from an Algerian textbook, regarding the 1884-85 Berlin Conference¹⁰⁶



Intellectual Invasion

Another notable lesson about colonialism comes from the Palestinian Authority curriculum for 2020-21, which discusses colonialism using an incendiary graphic that resonates with the antisemitic conspiracy theory that Jews and America seek world domination. The graphic shows a globe grasped by three appendages: an octopus-like tendril along with two arms wearing garb resembling the U.S. and Israeli flags. The captions state that “cultural colonialism” is “the most dangerous form of colonialism, because it attacks the spirit of the Ummah and its sanctities.”¹⁰⁷

Graphic from an Emirati textbook on what it calls the neglected history of “Ottoman massacres against the Arabs”¹⁰⁸



This theme is particularly stressed in Kuwait's 12th grade Islamic Issues textbook, which spends a large part of the course on it. It suggests Christendom as a whole has been waging an "intellectual invasion" to subvert Islamic societies for over 700 years and that a sweeping series of conspiracies are all part of this psychological war, including liberalism, socialism, Orientalist scholarship, Freemason lodges, and the pornography industry.¹⁰⁹ It presents a symbol on the back of the U.S. dollar as one of many symptoms of a Jewish-Masonic plot "drawn up in the Protocols of the Elders of Zion" to sterilize Arabs and install a world monarch in Jerusalem.¹¹⁰ It also alleges that Baha'is and Ahmadis are part of an imperialist plot to subvert Muslim nations.¹¹¹

Graphics from recent textbook lessons about America, from Bahrain and Qatar¹¹²



Civilizational Dialogue and Cooperation

In contrast, textbooks from nearby Bahrain and Qatar contain passages with anodyne images of American culture, such as a boy on a skateboard and girls marching with an American flag.¹¹³ Qatar’s curriculum also explicitly recommends the concept of “dialogue among civilizations,” but unfortunately its approach for doing so is to promote the work of Roger Garaudy in the lesson, a notorious Holocaust denier who is also portrayed as a hero in a Kuwaiti textbook.¹¹⁴

The UAE’s curriculum presents its diplomatic relations with major world powers as a national asset. One such lesson, which highlights cooperation with the U.S., contrasts starkly with the image of an American flag strangling the world featured in a Palestinian Authority schoolbook that describes 9/11 as an opportunity America exploited “to roll out its control and its hegemony over everyone.”¹¹⁵

Graphics from recent textbook lessons about the United States. Image on the left is from a Palestinian Authority textbook. Image on the right is from an Emirati textbook.¹¹⁶



Recommended Action Steps:

- Condemn and counteract content from non-state actors teaching civilizational conflict.
- Teach the history of colonialism responsibly and dispassionately.
- Remove school lessons that accuse the West of intellectual invasion.
- Expand lessons teaching civilizational dialogue and cooperation.

LEARNING ABOUT WAR AND PEACE

As the 9/11 Commission Report noted, one crucial aspect of the struggle for hearts and minds involves debating the meaning and applicability of the concept of jihad. In this regard – as well as broader questions about war and peace – progress is being made, although challenges remain.

Martyrdom Culture

Educational materials used in schools aligned with Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Houthis in Yemen place heavy emphasis on jihad and martyrdom against world powers, including but not limited to America and Israel.¹¹⁷

Unsurprisingly, similar content was also found in educational materials generated by ISIS.¹¹⁸

Graphic from a Qatari textbook: “Just and comprehensive peace is the right of all peoples”¹¹⁹



السلام العادل والشامل حق لجميع الشعوب

Unfortunately, the Palestinian Authority also still publishes textbooks that place a very heavy emphasis on jihad and martyrdom. It teaches 9th graders in a passage about “the wisdom behind fighting the infidels” that God “is capable of annihilating and killing the enemies” but instead “commanded [for believers] to fight them.”¹²⁰ And the PA’s 10th grade Arabic Language textbook teaches that Jerusalem “will spit out the scum of the foreigners.”¹²¹

Recontextualizing Jihad

However, most national curricula have taken steps toward reframing how the concept of jihad is taught, to reduce the odds of terrorist recruitment. For example, Saudi Arabia recently removed a longstanding passage calling jihad the pinnacle of Islamic doctrine, and it had already inserted textbook lessons that strictly forbid armed jihad if the ruler or one's parents do not approve.¹²²

Jordan's curriculum has made additional strides in this regard, for example presenting jihad as an element of faith that is lower in importance than filial piety and performing one's prayers.¹²³ The Hashemite Kingdom's curriculum also expressly prohibits common terrorist tactics – such as attacking non-Muslims, foreigners, embassies, and civilian or government facilities – and pairs it with scripture to explain why these sorts of attacks contravene the proper meaning of jihad.¹²⁴

The UAE's Islamic Studies textbooks also cite Quranic passages to argue against indiscriminate violence. For example, they teach that one of the cardinal sins according to Islam is “to deliberately harm human being[s] irrespective of religion, color or race, [which] is an offence against all of Mankind as a whole.”¹²⁵ Another uses scripture to encourage non-violent conflict resolution with other faiths, teaching that “tolerance and forgiveness change enmity into love.”¹²⁶

No Peace for Israel

One area where peaceful rhetoric is often missing has to do with school lessons about Israel, not least those passages that seem to encourage violence against Israel or Israelis.

Qatar's 2020-21 textbooks proclaim “just and comprehensive peace is the right of all peoples,”¹²⁷ but they also forbid “conceding any part of Palestine” and mandate “the liberation of Palestine,” which is defined just one page earlier to include not just the West Bank and Gaza but also all territory held by Israel before 1967.¹²⁸ A recent Kuwaiti textbook pairs a section about the Israeli-Arab conflict with a prophecy predicting that an end of days reckoning will come when “the Muslims fight the Jews, so that the Muslims kill them,” including every last Jew who will be hiding behind rocks and most trees.¹²⁹

Virtually every textbook in the region that discusses Zionism calls it inherently racist, rather than as one of many nationalisms in the world, which can have tolerant or intolerant streams.¹³⁰ Nearly every country published 2020-21 textbooks erasing Israel from certain maps – even states long at peace with Israel.¹³¹ Some textbooks teach that Israel plans to conquer land from the Nile to the Euphrates, ignoring that it has already signed treaties disavowing such alleged schemes.¹³²

Perhaps it would be asking too much for the concept of Zionism to be taught as a post-colonial movement for national liberation. But it should not be too much to expect that textbooks in the region define the concept of Zionism in a way that is not itself incendiary, that teach the most basic historically accurate facts about the Arab-Israeli peace process, and that teach the historical reality of the Holocaust to properly contextualize Jewish history and to encourage empathy with the other. Especially in the wake of recent Arab-Israeli peace accords, it is important not to overlook the need for making sure that educational content is aligned with peaceful relations.

Recommended Action Steps:

- Condemn and counteract content from non-state actors teaching violent extremism.
- Urge recipients of education foreign aid to revise any content that encourages conflict and violence.
- Include content that appropriately contextualizes the concept of jihad and that discourages violence against the other.
- Include Israel on maps, teach about the Arab-Israeli peace process, revise content that demonizes Israel or Zionism, and ensure history books appropriately teach the Holocaust.

CIVIC EDUCATION

The 9/11 Commission Report called for offering the children of the region a vision for their future featuring “widespread political participation... respect for the rule of law, openness in discussing differences, and tolerance for opposing points of view.”¹³³ Yet in 2012, a symposium of history and citizenship educators from the region found that these topics remained intensely politicized in schoolbooks, often in ways that discourage teaching minority experiences and stifle valid dissent.¹³⁴ Such challenges remain today. Lessons about political participation or human rights are becoming more common but also may steer clear of addressing important areas of debate.

Historical Models About Civics

Notably, Saudi Arabia's updated high school textbook for teaching the Kingdom's modern history and ancient heritage argues that inclusive citizenship was the secret to Medina's success under the Prophet Muhammad. Many Mideast curricula focus on how the Charter of Medina between the different communities eventually fell apart, teaching the episode as a cautionary tale against cooperation with Jews. Instead, this Saudi textbook emphasizes that the alliance between Muslims, Jews, and Christians was a crucial element of why the early Islamic State could spread and flourish, "so that tolerance, love, and peace would prevail," and that it represents a pioneering model for shared rights, responsibilities, solidarity, and religious freedom today.¹³⁵

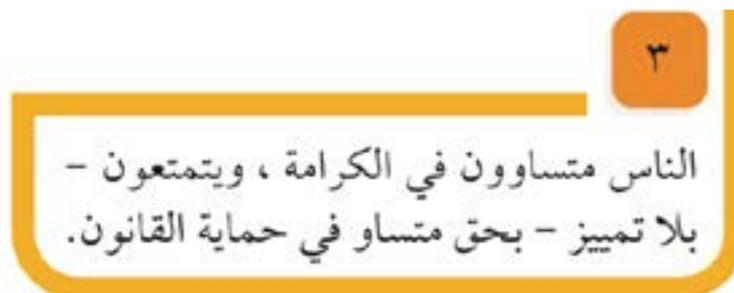
Mideast textbooks also display a similar debate about the civics lesson that should be drawn from interfaith interactions in Medieval Andalusia. For example, a recent 11th grade textbook from al-Azhar teaches that "the religious tolerance shown by Muslims toward Jews and Christians in Andalusia led to the arrival of a group of non-Muslims to high ranks... and this tempted some of them to revolt against the state."¹³⁶ On the other hand, the guide for history textbook authors produced by the Anna Lindh Foundation, Arab League, and UNESCO recommends teaching Andalusia as a model of religious coexistence and mutual contributions.¹³⁷

Contemporary Civics

Some of the most fascinating contemporary content actually comes from the same Kuwaiti textbook for Islamic Issues discussed earlier in this report for its intolerant passages and inaccurate conspiracy theories about Christians, Jews, Ahmadis, and Baha'is. Immediately after that barrage of objectionable content, the book then proceeds to teach a chapter on civics¹³⁸ that would actually be quite constructive if the problematic sections preceding it were to be removed.

This chapter in the Kuwaiti textbook focuses on teaching common principles between democracy and the Islamic concept of shura consultations. After introducing students to important human rights charters such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it teaches that "people are equal in dignity and enjoy equal right to protection under the law without discrimination."¹³⁹ It teaches this principle as an essential element of Islamic law as well, proclaiming that "Islamic Shari'a affirmed the importance of the principle of equality and non-discrimination, and in Islam the principle of equality is considered one of the historical keys of human civilization."¹⁴⁰

Graphic from a Kuwaiti textbook: “3. People are equal in dignity and enjoy equal right to protection under the law without discrimination”¹⁴¹



This textbook lesson also emphasizes the role of elections in Kuwait and teaches that “power in a democracy is in the hands of the people,” since one of the core principles of democracy is the “effectiveness” of participation for shaping political outcomes and “accountability” to citizens.¹⁴²

It suggests that both Islam and democracy guarantee “the right of an individual to embrace a particular religion” as well as “freedom of thought and expression,” in addition to supporting freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, and the right to form unions.¹⁴³ It also teaches that Islam guarantees the role of responsible opposition to authority, provided that exercising these rights does not involve treason, slander, or contravening the rights and dignity of others.¹⁴⁴

All things considered, this is a remarkably good approach to civic education in a region where most countries are categorized by Freedom House as “not free.”¹⁴⁵ Even if there is more that these school lessons can and should do to discourage infringements of civil or political rights in practice, hopefully such educational materials can encourage improved future conduct by governments.

Hudud Codes and Human Rights

One last area of challenge is the intersection between human rights, the rule of law, and traditional Islamic law regarding what are called hudud penalties. These refer to certain actions that are labeled particularly egregious moral crimes against God, for which strict penalties are set. In 2020 Saudi Arabia eliminated dozens of pages from its high school Jurisprudence curriculum dealing with the subject of hudud penalties, which had taught for many years that the appropriate consequence for adultery, anal sex, or conversion away from Islam is execution.

This is an important change, since it helps address a concern noted in the 2003 curriculum study presented at the Saudi National Dialogue that such lessons present students with “an image that reduces treatment of [‘other’] people to a chain of violent punishments.”¹⁴⁶ However, because students are likely to encounter this controversy in other areas of public discourse, an ideal next step would be to actually teach students the reasons why such theorized penalties should not be applied. For example, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has suggested such penalties are invalid because they rely on hadiths that are less reliable than those that teach forbearance.¹⁴⁷

Islamic scholars such as Jamal Badawi, Abdullah bin Bayyah, and Hamza Yusuf provide additional reasoning in this regard. Badawi asserts that there is no earthly punishment in the Quran for conversion away from Islam, and that hadiths which recommend executing an apostate are less authoritative than those that suggest the Prophet Muhammad avoided such an approach.¹⁴⁸ Bin Bayyah has said that the traditional penalty for conversion away from Islam is no longer applicable today because its intended purpose of keeping Muslims within the religion is outweighed by the number of potential believers it would drive away.¹⁴⁹ And Yusuf argues that the death penalty for anal sex under Islamic law was intended to be solely theoretical, arguing that the extremely onerous evidentiary standards mean such punishments should be treated as “legal fictions because they are impossible to prove.”¹⁵⁰ Ideally, it would be even better to teach that such penalties are wrong because they violate what the Kuwaiti lesson cited above refers to as a basic premise of Islam: the dignity, personhood, and freedom of the individual.¹⁵¹

Recommended Action Steps:

- Include lessons teaching about historical models of civic pluralism.
- Teach about the full array of human and civil rights guaranteed by international treaties, as well as the importance of civic participation and accountable government.
- Increase content that discusses why not to apply the death penalty for hudud codes.

Conclusion

In the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, it was acknowledged by a broad spectrum of stakeholders that the fight against terrorism needs to include peace and tolerance education reforms in the broader Middle East. This recognition was voiced not just in the text of the 9/11 Commission Report but also by the Arab Human Development Reports, by officials and civil society activists in a variety of major Arab countries, and European governments, both bilaterally and through multilateral fora such as the G-8 and EU's Euro-Mediterranean dialogue process.

If the bar for success is whether or not national curricula in the Arab world are free from materials that could contribute to hate and violence, then this process is nowhere near completion. Most curricula are still replete with antisemitism, to take just one example among many where more work needs to be done. However, rhetorical support for peace and tolerance is widespread, and enough good examples exist that the way forward from here is relatively clear.

This report documented best and worst practices from contemporary textbooks in the Arab world, across five crucial issue areas: (1) teaching comparative religion, (2) directives about how to treat the adherents of other faiths, (3) clash of civilizations narratives, (4) lessons about peace, war, and jihad, and (5) lessons about civics and human rights.

Although the persistence of problematic school lessons today in each of these areas is quite disconcerting, the positive examples collected in each of these sections can hopefully serve as a potential model for receptive officials. The “recommended action steps” in each of these sections are also intended to provide a concrete roadmap for facilitating positive change.

Of course, many of these recommendations depend upon children having access to education in the first place, which remains a serious challenge in areas of conflict. Ensuring that young people whose families are refugees, seeking asylum, or internally displaced receive access to education is another essential aspect of combating extremism, and of course that education should be from textbooks that are free of hate. More also must be done to marginalize extremist educational content produced by terrorist groups and their supporters in the region and beyond.¹⁵²

But for those parts of the region where governments are responsive to diplomatic engagement and express an interest in peace and tolerance education, outside encouragement and support can be essential. Technical aid and model lesson plans can also be useful tools, as can bilateral and multilateral dialogues, both at the governmental level and with representatives from civil society.

Building out a system for mutual or independent reviews of national curricula in the region according to agreed-upon standards for peace and tolerance education could also help spur healthy competition and reform. In the context of the recent Abraham Accords peace process between Israel and several Arab states, right now might be an especially promising window for such conversations. And yet the record of the past two decades warrants healthy skepticism that effective education reforms being systematically implemented also cannot be taken for granted.

Peace and tolerance education touches on sensitive matters of national identity, and in most countries of the Arab world the publication of such textbooks is a matter of sovereign policy. Yet hopefully the examples in this report provide a wake-up call that the challenge of education reform in the Arab world following 9/11 is still nowhere near complete. The international community has a vested interest in helping to define success in this regard and to support urgent, much-needed progress toward that goal. The people of the region, and the world, deserve it.

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About ADL (the Anti-Defamation League)

ADL is the world's leading anti-hate organization. Founded in 1913 in response to an escalating climate of antisemitism and bigotry, its timeless mission is to protect the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment for all. Today, ADL continues to fight all forms of hate with the same vigor and passion. A global leader in exposing extremism, delivering anti-bias education, and fighting hate online, ADL is the first call when acts of antisemitism occur. ADL's ultimate goal is a world in which no group or individual suffers from bias, discrimination, or hate.

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