

Qatar's Multidimensional Takeover of D.C.'s Georgetown University

Executive Summary

In 2005, Georgetown University (GU) established its Qatar campus—Georgetown University in Qatar (GU-Q)—through a partnership with the Qatar Foundation. It has since renewed its contract multiple times and extended it through 2035.

Though the collaboration promises academic consistency and maintains Georgetown's hiring and curricular control, the financial arrangements—in which tuition is retained by the Qatar Foundation and the university receives substantial operational funding—create vulnerabilities.

This report estimates Georgetown received over \$971 million from Qatar over 20 years, not only sustaining the Doha campus but also funding faculty, research initiatives, and endowed chairs on the Washington, D.C., campus.

These unchecked funds provided by Qatar demonstrate how foreign countries can shape scholarship, faculty recruitment, and teaching in our universities to reflect their preferences.

At Georgetown, courses and research show growing ideological drift toward post-colonial scholarship, anti-Western critiques, and anti-Israel advocacy, with some faculty engaged in political activism related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or anti-Western interventionism.

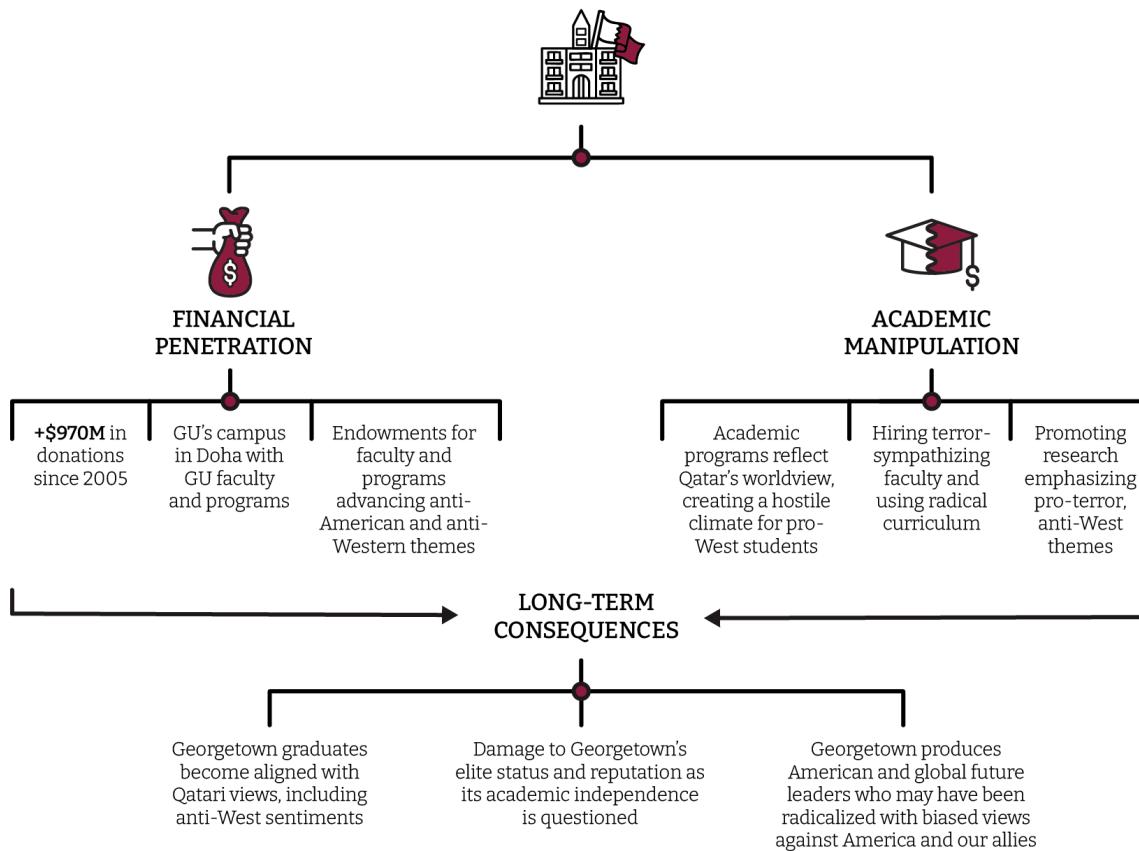
Beyond Georgetown, Qatar has invested billions over two decades to establish satellite campuses and fund research partnerships at elite U.S. universities and institutions—including Texas A&M, Northwestern, Carnegie Mellon, Harvard, and Cornell—through its Education City in Doha and targeted donations.

These investments have raised national security concerns due to sensitive research transfers, financial dependencies where Qatar controls operations, and programming that aligns with state-funded narratives.

Together, these efforts form a coordinated soft-power strategy enabling Qatar to shape academic agendas and influence how future American leaders and policymakers perceive Middle Eastern politics and U.S. foreign policy, which is part of the Gulf nation's larger plan to use its money to buy influence not only in American education and policy, but in American governance, sports, real estate, media, and more.

Key Findings

Qatar's Multidimensional Takeover of Georgetown University



Board Representation and Campus Decision Making: Direct representation of Qatari leadership at the highest levels of Georgetown's governance, along with dual-affiliated faculty and staff, ensures the ongoing representation of Qatari interests in academic and operational decision making.

Endowed Chairs and Research Agendas: Qatari-funded academic positions guide the intellectual orientation of both campuses. These positions focus on themes aligned with Qatari interests—such as Muslim societies, Islamic history, critiques of Western policy, and decolonial scholarship—in some instances at the expense of balanced engagement with broader global issues or local critiques.

Ideological Advocacy and Faculty Activism: Several key faculties funded by Qatari endowments have taken public stands on contentious issues, expressing strong, anti-Western, anti-Israel, and pro-Palestinian activism, which permeates teaching and campus programming. The Center for Contemporary Arab Studies (CCAS) and the Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding (ACMCU) have become hubs for critical advocacy and political activism that is often co-sponsored by the Qatar campus.

Curricular Adaptation and Soft Power: Despite the requirement to maintain U.S. academic standards, GU-Q adapts its curriculum and seminars to local Qatari and Muslim norms, prioritizing regionally relevant case studies and postcolonial critiques and fostering extensive exchange programs that promote Qatari perspectives among Qatari and American students alike.

Governance and Oversight: Georgetown maintains nominal control over faculty, curriculum, and admissions at GU-Q, but financial dependencies and strategic governance roles for Qatari leadership, including direct representation on Georgetown's Board of Directors, raise the risk of foreign influence in institutional decision making.

Financial Influence: The Qatar Foundation's funding model ensures that the university is financially dependent on Qatari support, with the bulk of tuition revenue retained in Qatar and substantial funds flowing to the Washington campus for academic chairs, scholarships, and research. This creates subtle but pervasive pressure on hiring priorities and the scope of research to suit Qatar's agenda and goals.

Risks to Academic Freedom and Independence: The pervasive influence of Qatari funding and governance risks undermining academic freedom, produces scholarship and teaching that aligns with Qatar's agenda—potentially at the expense of American values and agendas—and advances politicized ideological narratives within an elite American institution.

GU-Qatar: Partnership and Governance Concerns

Georgetown University [established](#) its partnership with Qatar in 2005, founding Georgetown University in Qatar in Doha's Education City with the Qatar Foundation.

The contract was first renewed in 2015 and [extended](#) further in April 2025 for ten additional years.

The pillars of the GU-Qatar partnership are included in the testimony released in July 2025 by GU's Interim President Robert M. Groves's July 15, 2025, [testimony](#) before the U.S. House Committee on Education and the Workforce.

While these principles are intended to govern the collaboration between the two institutions, they also highlight governance concerns at Georgetown:

- GU-Q was established with the [aim](#) of “offering the Bachelor of Science in Foreign Service, using the same required courses as the DC campus.”
 - o This arrangement is designed to ensure academic consistency and uphold Georgetown's standards across both campuses. However, it also raises questions about whether the university has the flexibility to adapt its curriculum to local sensitivities or whether it is bound by regulations imposed on it by Qatar. Georgetown must balance maintaining its academic integrity and freedom with navigating a cultural and political environment that differs from that in Washington, D.C. GU-Q was [identified](#) by the Foundation for



Source: [Qatar Foundation](#)

Individual Rights in Education (FIRE) as one of the 10 U.S.-affiliated campuses with the most restrictive approach to student speech, largely because of how it applies Qatari law to campus expression. This poor ranking reflects tensions between Georgetown's formal commitment to free inquiry and the legal and political constraints of operating in Doha, where national laws limit criticism of religion and other topics they deem sensitive.

- “[Residing](#) in Doha are full-time Georgetown faculty.”
 - The presence of Georgetown faculty in Doha enhances institutional oversight and imposes upon the university an ethical and institutional obligation to ensure that the intellectual orientation of the Doha campus remains aligned with the academic principles and values that underpin Georgetown operations in Washington, D.C.
- “By contractual obligation, Georgetown [maintains](#) full control over GU-Q faculty and staff hiring, curriculum and course content, student admissions, and evaluation of all personnel.”
 - The financial and operational partnership with Qatar Foundation introduces an ongoing responsibility to ensure that Qatar's control over Georgetown remains substantive rather than nominal. Georgetown must guard against subtle or indirect pressures that could shape hiring priorities, research agendas, or admissions practices. The university's D.C. leadership is thus accountable for monitoring whether institutional independence in Qatar is genuinely maintained and ensuring that partnership arrangements do not compromise governance standards across the university.

Funding

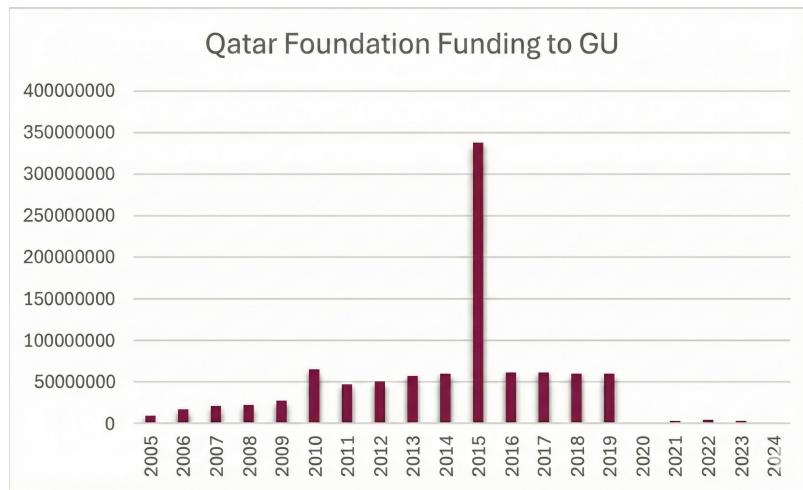
GU Interim President Groves also [mentioned](#) the financial relations between Georgetown and GU-Q before the House Committee on Education and the Workforce: “The financial model of Georgetown Qatar is different from that in DC. The Qatar Foundation provides financial support that Georgetown uses to pay the salaries of its faculty and staff in Doha and costs of their use of DC services in IT, HR, and finance. Tuition paid is retained by the Qatar Foundation.”

According to his testimony, the main Georgetown campus in D.C. receives money from the Qatar Foundation specifically to cover the expenses for the Doha campus, including salaries for faculty and staff based in Qatar and administrative and technical support costs that the D.C. campus provides (such as IT, human resources, and financial management services). The fact that tuition is retained by the Qatar Foundation indicates that Georgetown does not collect tuition income from GU-Q students; instead, it operates under a service contract model.

According to the data provided by the U.S. Department of Education, Georgetown received more than \$971 million in funding from Qatar across 76 contracts during their 20 years of cooperation. The contracts started in 2005 and run through 2025, with annual values ranging from about \$25 million to more than \$60 million in different years. The years in which GU received the highest sums of funds were 2015 (\$337,889,983), 2010 (\$64,765,551) and 2016 (\$61,573,231). The allocation of such significant resources in 2015 was due to the [10-year anniversary](#) of the partnership and the expansion of GU-Q's undergraduate SFS degree to include executive/professional education and custom training. Additionally, in early 2015, faculty from Georgetown's main campus [joined](#) the Qatar staff (namely Professors Kai-Henrik Barth, Jo Ann Moran Cruz, Matthew Tinkcom, and Daniel Westbrook).

Considering various factors, including the relatively low number of both [enrolled students](#) in GU-Q (465 in 2024) and [faculty](#) (GU-Q lists 49 scholars), along with the small facility, it is possible that the financial contributions from the Qatar Foundation may not be confined solely to sustaining the Doha campus, but may also support Georgetown's D.C. operations.

Evidence indicates that Qatar, via multiple funding channels, provides direct financial support to Georgetown's D.C. campus, where Qatar sponsors academic chairs, scholarships, and several research initiatives. Qatar created and funds three Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani endowed chairs in [Muslim Societies](#), the [History of Islam](#), and [Indian Politics](#). Additionally, in 2017 the Qatari royal family endowed a \$2 million gift to GU to establish the "Qatar Endowed Scholarship Fund" to [assist](#) financially disadvantaged undergraduates at GU's D.C. campus.



Source: [Section 117 Foreign Gift and Contract Data](#)

In 2015, the Embassy of the State of Qatar in Washington, D.C., was formally [inducted](#) into Georgetown University's prestigious 1789 Society, which recognizes individuals and institutions that have made exceptionally generous contributions of \$1 million or more.

The Embassy donation was essential for the [establishment](#) of the Qatar post-doctoral fellowship—a one-year position at Georgetown University's Center for Contemporary Arab Studies intended for a recent Ph.D. graduate whose research focuses on U.S.-Arab relations, Arab Studies, or Islamic Studies—and for the funding of the Clovis and Hala Salaam Maksoud Chair in Arabic Studies.

Endowed Chairs

The establishment of endowed chairs at U.S. universities is often perceived as a commitment to academic excellence, but it has strategic implications that go beyond mere prestige. Although it provides a reliable funding source for the university that helps attract prominent faculty, it also shapes the priorities of teaching and research to reflect the goals and agenda of the funding source—in this case, Qatar.

By tying funding to specific disciplines or areas of research, donors can influence the intellectual direction of an institution, often aligning it with their own interests.

This is clearly seen at Georgetown University, where the Qatar Foundation established and funds chairs in three strategic fields mentioned above: Muslim Societies, History of Islam, and Indian Politics. Funding chairs in such fields allows Qatar to influence how Islam, regional politics, and the modern Muslim world are interpreted within a prestigious American academic institution that educates future members of the U.S. diplomatic corps in the heart of our nation's capital.

Qatar Foundation's Endowed Chairs

1. Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani Endowed Chair of Muslim Societies at the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service (SFS): Shenila Khoja Moolji

Shenila Khoja Moolji was [appointed](#) as the Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani Endowed Chair of Muslim Societies in August 2022. She is a Shia Ismaili Muslim scholar known for her scholarship on Muslims, gender, and Pakistan studies. While much of her work has a transnational frame, there are several dimensions in which she reflects specifically on the U.S. and American society. In her book *The Impossibility of Muslim Boyhood*, she [argues](#) that in American public culture, Muslim boys are often constructed as “terrorists-in-the-making.” In her book *Forging the Ideal Educated Girl*, Moolji [claims](#) international development campaigns, NGOs, and U.S. policy or philanthropic discourses promote certain images of “educated Muslim girl(s)” as the solution to problems like poverty, terrorism, or gender inequality.



Shenila Khoja Moolji. Source: [Youtube](#)

Moolji's scholarship and [commentary](#) consistently center on critiques of Western policies, discourses, and representations of Muslim societies, while remaining largely

silent on human rights abuses or gender inequities in non-Western contexts, including Qatar. This selective focus is also echoed in her Al Jazeera opinion [pieces](#) that [criticize](#) Western civilization and its treatment and representation of Muslim societies. This suggests an ideological alignment that prioritizes anti-Western critique over balanced engagement with global injustices.

The same bias characterizes Moolji's teaching at GU, where, for example, her course [American Muslims](#) focuses on how "Muslims in America hope to dismantle exploitative hierarchies and the role that religious ethics play in this project." Likewise, her course [Muslim Women and the West](#) aimed to counter the alleged "racist, capitalist, and heteronormative logics" influencing the life of Muslim women in Western countries.

2. Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani Professor in the History of Islam at the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service (SFS): Tamara Sonn

Tamara Sonn was [appointed](#) Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani Professor in the History of Islam in 2015 and serves as director of the Alwaleed Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service.

She has long [focused](#) on reinterpreting Muslim-West relations through a postcolonial lens. In her [book](#), *Is Islam an Enemy of the West?* she argues that "politics—not religion—inform the grievances of many who oppose the West; war is not the solution; Islam is not the problem." Her lectures and essays frequently [claim](#) that Western misunderstanding of Islam stems from colonial history and media distortion rather than from Islamic ideology itself.



Tamara Sonn. Source: [Sagepub](#)

In 2018, she [stated](#) that "Islamophobia [is] being created purposefully to achieve specific goals," describing "the West" as a recent fiction built to consolidate global power. Critics, including the Middle East Forum (MEF), have [described](#) this framing as a "root-cause analysis" that "holds the West responsible for conflicts," while treating Islamist or authoritarian movements as reactions rather than independent agents. Sonn's scholarship emphasizing Western culpability, presenting Islam as a misunderstood and peaceful civilization, and whitewashing Jihadism, fits comfortably within Qatar's broader agenda to promote sympathetic understanding and acceptance of Islam worldwide.

3. Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani Professor of Indian Politics at Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service (SFS): Irfan Nooruddin

Irfan Nooruddin is an Indian-American Muslim political scientist of comparative political economy and governance in India and other emerging economies. In interviews and policy writings, he often emphasizes U.S. foreign policy failures, the dangers of Western interventionism, and the importance of “decentering the West” in global political analysis.

As part of Georgetown’s [India Initiative](#), he has described India’s rise as part of a “post-Western order” in which global governance should no longer be dominated by Western states. Citing his associations and statements, the Stop Hindu Hate Advocacy Network (SHHAN) has [labeled](#) Nooruddin as a “Hindu hater” and criticized the Qatari funding of his tenured position at GU. SHHAN also [points](#) to Nooruddin’s affiliation with the Indian American Muslim Council (IAMC) and to the [testimony](#) he released in 2023 before the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom to [designate](#) India as a Country of Particular Concern regarding religious freedom.

Nooruddin’s framing of global politics—emphasizing Western interventionism, critiquing U.S. foreign policy, and highlighting the agency of the Global South—aligns with Qatar’s broader soft-power objectives to advance non-Western narratives and agency. Qatar’s sponsorship of the Indian Politics chair reflects its [strategy](#) of deepening relations with India, both for energy exports and as a counterbalance to Saudi Arabia and Emirati influence in South Asia.

4. The Clovis and Hala Salaam Maksoud Chair in Arab Studies and Director of the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies: Fida Adely

Since 2015, Qatar’s embassy in Washington, D.C. has funded the Clovis and Hala Salaam Maksoud Chair in Arab Studies at GU’s SFS, a position held by Fida Adely since it was [established](#) in September 2007. Adely is an anthropologist specializing in education, labor, and gender in the Arab world, especially Jordan. A significant aspect of Adely’s scholarship involves critical analysis of Western development frameworks. In her [article](#) “Educating Women for Development: The Arab Human Development Report 2005 and the Problem with Women’s Choices,” Adely critiques how international development reports frame Arab women’s advancement. She challenges what she perceives as “Western-centric assumptions,” arguing that such frameworks often impose external values while claiming to empower women through expanded “choices.”



Irfan Nooruddin. Source: [Atlantic Council](#)



Fida Adely. Source: [GU Website](#)

Beyond her academic research, Adely has been actively engaged in anti-Israel advocacy. She is a prominent supporter of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) Movement and in 2014 signed the [statement](#) “Middle East Studies Scholars and Librarians Call for the Boycott of Israeli Academic Institutions” advocating for institutional and academic boycotts. In 2016, she co-authored an [essay](#) with Barnard College’s Thea Abu El-Haj titled “Violating the Right to Education for Palestinians: A Case for Boycotting Israeli Academic Institutions,” arguing that Israeli policies systematically violate Palestinian educational rights and thus academic boycott is an appropriate response.

Adely is a [supporter](#) of Al-Awda and a [member](#) of USPCN-DC, the D.C. chapter of the United States Palestinian Community Network, an organization known for its support of Palestinian terrorists like Rasmea Odeh.

In October 2023, following Hamas’s attacks on Israel, Adely signed a [public statement](#) titled “Scholars Warn of Potential Genocide in Gaza,” claiming that “Palestinians of the Gaza Strip constitute a substantial proportion of the Palestinian nation, and are being targeted by Israel because they are Palestinian.” On November 3, 2023, Adely co-authored a [viewpoint](#) in GU’s *The Hoya* titled “Listen to Palestinian Voices” with fellow Georgetown faculty members, expressing their “concerns about the attacks on freedom of speech” at GU and other U.S. campuses.

In January 2024, Adely was among the [founders](#) of GU Faculty for Justice in Palestine (FJP). In spring 2024, she [participated in](#) and served as spokesperson for the GU Gaza Encampment. During the campus occupation, she [released](#) an official statement to the student-run news magazine *The Georgetown Voice* claiming, “We’re coming out today not only to support the encampment [...] really to support all of the students who have been denied access to education, access to life, access to comfort in Gaza.”

Adely’s position and activism within Georgetown—a school whose Middle East studies faculty has been [described](#) by academic watchdogs as “the most intolerant, ideological and anti-Israel, and pro-Islamist” in the United States—further illustrates the entrenchment of her bias. The CCAS has been criticized for advancing a politicized approach to Middle East studies that dismisses Islamist extremism while exaggerating Western culpability. Adely’s leadership [role](#), alongside collaborators in Arab academic networks such as Ramallah’s Birzeit University (which [has](#) Hamas ties and sympathies) indicates an intellectual alignment [prioritizing](#) “Palestinian liberation through education, advocacy, and action” over neutral scholarship. In September 2024, Adely even attended the [Reimagining Palestine](#) conference at GU-Q [alongside](#) Hamas and Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) terror operatives Shawan Jabarin and Wadah Khanfar.



Source: [The Georgetown Voice](#)

Since August 2023, Fida Adely has served as director of Georgetown University's Center for Contemporary Arab Studies (CCAS).

Qatari influence on CCAS is direct, as the Qatari Embassy in D.C. sponsors the Qatar Post-Doctoral Fellowship, a one-year [scholarship](#) worth \$65,000 that supports a recent Ph.D. graduate working on the topic of U.S.-Arab relations, Arab Studies, or Islamic Studies. Recipients are [required](#) to teach a seminar at GU and travel to Qatar to deliver a public lecture at any educational institution in Doha.

The academic fellows, topics of the Center's research, and classes funded by this scholarship all demonstrate the kind of agenda Qatar wishes to advance at CCAS:

- Adey Almohsen (2023-2024) [focused](#) his work on “historiciz[ing] Palestinian thought in the years between the Nakba and the Six Day War.”
- Mark Drury (2022–2023) [focused](#) his research on “how unresolved tensions between anticolonial and nationalist political projects continue to shape forms of political mobilization and belonging across Western Sahara, Mauritania, Morocco, and Algeria.”
- Marie (Alienor) van den Bosch (2018–2019) [wrote](#) her dissertation on “political survival strategies through economic diversification in oil-dependent countries.”
- Juan Romero (2008–2009) [taught](#) graduate seminars such as The Great Powers and the Middle East and the History of Iraq.
- Sherene Seikaly (2007-2008) [wrote](#) a dissertation called “Meatless Days: Consumption and Capitalism in Wartime Palestine 1939-1948.”

The fellows' research often explores Arab identity, postcolonial narratives, and regional development, including Palestinian history, as these topics are aligned with Qatar's cultural diplomacy goals and are consistent with Qatar's soft-power approach to global academia.

In addition to the postdoctoral fellowship, in the past Qatar Foundation International [sponsored](#) CCAS's Qatar Scholarship Program, dedicated to hosting Arabic language students from the United States at Qatar University in Doha for an academic year to study the language more deeply.

CCAS Became an Anti-Zionist Platform

Under Fida Adely's leadership and influenced by her pro-Palestinian activism, CCAS has increasingly centered its focus on “Palestinian” issues and become a platform for promoting anti-Israel and anti-Zionist sentiment at Georgetown University.

On October 17, 2023, Fida Adely and ACMCU director Nader Hashemi co-signed a [letter](#) on the early developments of the Israel-Hamas War which downplayed Israeli losses and the trauma of its civilians by framing Israeli actions as the primary source of violence. The letter refrains from defining Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad as terror groups, stating that “last week started with a surprise attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, by armed groups based in Gaza (Hamas and Islamic Jihad),” and minimizes the killing

of Israeli civilians: “The killing of civilians is a clear violation of international law. These laws, however imperfect, are meant to protect us all; otherwise they are meaningless.”

The statement also claims: “Israel’s response has been disproportionate. It has taken revenge on the entire population of Gaza’s 2.3 million people, half of whom are children. … What we are witnessing is a Nakba of grave proportions, with active support from the United States and other Western liberal democracies.”

In 2024, CCAS also raised money to support four new scholarships for graduate students from Gaza. Accounts report that CCAS helped recruit students and supported their and their family’s travel to Washington, D.C. Students, alumni, faculty, and staff also helped students with housing, health care, administrative forms, dinners, and community.

Also in 2024, the CCAS collaborated with several American and foreign academic institutions and research centers—including Georgetown Qatar, Jadaliyya, Birzeit University, and the American University of Cairo—to produce Teaching about Palestine, workshops for public school teachers “covering Palestinian history and culture. … and

community teach-ins on topics such as the war in Gaza.” Workshops covered topics including antisemitism and antizionism; colonial narratives; Know Your Rights: The Assault on Campus Activism; Genocide in Gaza; Palestine, Zionism & the Nakba; Ramifications of UNRWA’s Funding Suspension; From Ongoing Nakba, to Ongoing Return; Weaponizing Antisemitism to Stifle Criticism of Israel; and Deconstructing Western Media Narratives: Israel’s War/Genocide in Gaza. CCAS consistently emphasizes supposed Israeli wrongdoing and omits any Israeli perspectives or the role of terror groups to proffer a one-sided, misinformed, and overtly anti-Israel agenda.

Although CCAS aims to support research on the entire Arab world, its faculty publishes a summer reading list for incoming students that focuses heavily on Palestinian or pro-Palestinian authors and topics. The list includes materials written by PFLP founder Ghassan Kanafani or Tareq Baconi’s “Hamas Contained,” which fails to describe Hamas as a terror group, instead presenting it as a social and political actor.

CCAS also hosts events focusing on Gaza and Palestinian issues. It screened the documentary “Gaza Ghetto,” produced by CCAS fellow Joan Mandell. In the fall of 2024, CCAS partnered with the Sports



Source: [Jadaliyya](#)

Industry Management Program at Georgetown to host the event “Not Allowed to Win: Exclusionary Policies Towards Palestinian Athletes,” featuring GU-Q professor Danyel Reiche, who presented case studies on Palestinian athletes living in Lebanon and the “discrimination they face due to their statelessness.” In the spring of 2024, CCAS, Georgetown University Medical Students for Palestine and Doctors Against Genocide [hosted](#) a panel of five healthcare workers for the event “Voices from Palestine: Healthcare Advocacy in a Humanitarian Crisis.”

Interoperability of GU and GU-Q

Qatar exerts influence across all levels of Georgetown University governance, from its board of directors to the Main Campus Executive Faculty (MCEF) to the Staff and Academic and Administrative Professionals Advisory Council.

GU Board of Directors

The GU [Board of Directors](#) includes Sheikh Abdulla bin Ali Al Thani, son of the former Emir of Qatar Ali bin Abdullah Al Thani, who also [serves](#) as vice chairman of the board of regents and chairman of the executive committee at Qatar University. Al Thani also holds leadership roles at the Qatar Leadership Centre.

The GU Board of Directors oversees strategic decisions and institutional governance, and therefore the presence of a member of Qatar’s ruling family raises concerns about potential Qatari influence on academic priorities, research agendas, and policy positions.



Sheikh Abdulla bin Ali Al Thani
Source: [World Economic Forum](#)

Georgetown’s Main Campus Executive Faculty (MCEF)

One faculty member from GU-Q serves as member of the GU [Main Campus Executive Faculty](#) (MCEF), the primary legislative body of Georgetown University, which is [composed of](#) faculty members authorized to make and approve academic policies, set curriculum standards, and oversee key academic regulations. MCEF functions alongside the Faculty Senate, but whereas the Senate often advises and represents broader faculty interests, the MCEF has formal authority to enact binding academic decisions that affect the university’s educational mission. The inclusion of a GU-Q representative who holds a direct role in shaping university policies raises concerns about the influence of foreign-funded individuals on domestic decision making, particularly at an educational institution that teaches, trains, and produces the next generation of diplomats, leaders, and policy makers.

Professor of world literature at GU-Q Ian Almond is the [2025-2026 MCEF representative](#).

Almond is an outspoken critic of Israel who has expressed support for Hamas. His LinkedIn [biography](#) includes the phrase, “Against the genocide in Gaza; solidarity with ALL victims of war and oppression,” instead of useful professional information. His picture is framed in the Palestinian flag (right).

Almond publicly [endorsed](#) Hamas’s October 7 atrocities, stating, “I don’t blame Hamas for this” and “it didn’t start on Oct. 7.” He [refers](#) to Israel using the classic antisemitic trope of a “gangster-state” and publicly [endorsed](#) the vandalism perpetrated by Palestine Action, a British anti-Israel organization [designated](#) in 2025 as a terrorist organization by the UK after vandals broke into Royal Air Force Station Brize Norton, defaced military planes, and [caused](#) over £30 million worth of damage.

Almond also served as a contributor to Qatari-funded Al Jazeera, where he [wrote](#) anti-Israel opinion articles, including “The Danger of Conflating Anti-Zionism with Anti-Semitism,” which defends then-Labour leader and well-documented antisemite Jeremy Corbyn against accusations of antisemitism, which he calls “frankly ridiculous.”



Ian Almond
Source: [LinkedIn](#)

GU Staff and Academic and Administrative Professionals Advisory Council

GU-Q is also represented on the GU Staff and Academic and Administrative Professionals Advisory Council on the Main Campus, which serves as the official platform for staff to share opinions and concerns regarding the conduct of institutional affairs and workplace life.

The GU-Q representative to the Council is Arwa El Kahlout, a University of College-London alumna working as a library assistant at GU-Q. Kahlout has shared anti-Israel content on her social media platforms.

On October 19, 2023, she posted a video of the English song “My Name Is Palestine,” featuring images of the Great Return March and other violent acts perpetrated by Palestinians against Israel, as well as of the bodies of Palestinian terrorists covered by the Hamas flag, with the caption, “The Palestinian cause is honorable” (See right).

Dual-Affiliated Scholars

Dual affiliation implies a circulation of agendas, content, and materials, with scholars often carrying the institutional priorities, research interests, and political dynamics of one campus into the other.

Sawfan M. Masri is the dean of Georgetown University in Qatar and a Distinguished Professor of the Practice at Georgetown's SFS. Originally from the Palestinian town of Nablus, Masri grew up in Jordan and served as executive vice president for Global Centers and Global Development at Columbia University before joining GU-Q. Under Masri's direction, GU-Q progressively became a platform for anti-Israel rhetoric, with an increasing number of events, conferences, and initiatives promoting speakers and organizations that demonize Israel while sympathizing with Hamas and other terrorist groups.

For example, in December 2023, Masri chaired the Doha Forum session titled “The Imperative of Palestinian Political Renewal,” at which he claimed that “Western states are beholden to their interests and have given Israel a carte blanche to pursue its genocidal attacks on Gaza.” In January 2024, Masri moderated a public talk by Al Shabaka’s President of the Board Tareq Baconi, who claimed that “Gaza is the epicenter of Palestinian resistance.”

Qatar's Focus on Georgetown's School of Foreign Service (SFS)



Source: Arwa Kahlout X

Founded in 1919, the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service (SFS) is GU's professional school for international relations and the oldest American professional school devoted to diplomacy and global affairs.

Both the Washington campus and GU-Q award the B.S. in Foreign Service (BSFS) degree and require the core curriculum—a defined set of topics that students are required to study within the first two years of their degree. The GU-Q site and the SFS bulletin explicitly explain that GU-Q students complete the same BSFS Core in the first two years, and then pursue more specific majors offered on the Doha campus. Thus, GU-Q students officially receive a BSFS degree from Georgetown.



Source: [GU SFS Instagram](#)

The Core Curriculum

The SFS Core Curriculum is the basis of teaching and materials for both campuses and includes the following topics: Proseminar, Maps/Map of the Modern World, Pathways to Social Justice, Quantitative Reasoning and Data Literacy, and selections from economics, government, history, philosophy, and humanities.

GU-Q explicitly states that its undergraduate BSFS is built on the same SFS Core, which is the main mechanism by which the two campuses deliver the same degree.

The main GU-SFS in D.C. offers a larger set of majors (for example: Regional & Comparative Studies, Global Business; Science, Technology, and International Affairs; etc.), while GU-Q offers a subset of SFS majors on site, notably: Culture & Politics (CULP), International Economics (IECO), International History (IHIS) and International Politics (IPOL).

Proseminar (INAF 1010 / First-Year Proseminar)

Proseminars are small, interdisciplinary seminars in the fall of freshman year meant to help first-year SFS students adapt to research, discussion, writing, and interdisciplinary thinking.

GU's 2025-2026 proseminar, titled Politics of Resistance, is taught by Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani Professor of Indian Politics Irfan Nooruddin. The course focuses on “different forms of resistance, asking why some societies and periods of history are more likely to experience particular forms of political resistance than others.” In past academic years, proseminars taught included: American Muslims, Authoritarianism, Peace to End all Peace, The Jewish Century, and Money and Markets with instructors such as Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani Endowed Chair of Muslim Societies Shenila Khoja Moolji. GU-Q proseminars covered topics such as Women in/and Journalism and Islam & Human Rights.

Maps / “Map of the Modern World” (INAF 1000 / INAF 008)

This course is an introduction to physical and political geography, which includes region-by-region lectures and a cumulative map examination. GU-Q has offered Map of the Modern World on campus, and

its founding dean James Reardon-Anderson [taught](#) versions of the course when he was in Doha. GU-Q materials emphasize how physical geography shapes politics and economics in the MENA region as well as globally—so the course content is the same in structure to the course taught at GU, but often includes more regionally relevant examples and regional guest lecturers.

Government / International Politics & History Courses

Topics covered in [these courses](#) include political institutions, comparative politics, international relations theory, diplomatic history, and thematic history seminars. A broad faculty pool from political science, history, and area studies teach these courses at GU, including Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani Professor of Indian Politics Irfan Nooruddin. Syllabi often [include](#) European and U.S. foreign policy case studies. At GU-Q, courses are taught by Doha [faculty](#) and the GU-Q International Politics courses emphasize Gulf-relevant [case studies](#), including the Arab Spring and more MENA-focused [materials](#) and regional guest lecturers.

Many GU-Q courses—especially in Culture & Politics, International History, and thematic seminars—include postcolonial, decolonial, and critical approaches that examine such tropes as Western imperialism, colonial legacies, and critiques of Western policy.

Examples include the GU-Q class Gulf Ethnography, which [discusses](#) the “partiality of anthropological work produced in Euro-Americans contexts that do not reflect the facts on the ground.” In October 2025, GU-Q hosted the “[Decolonizing Energy](#)” symposium to discuss “energetic liberation” and “the colonial legacies of the energy systems.” Those offerings are part of GU-Q’s mainstream academic practice and feature critiques of “Western dominance” as a legitimate scholarly approach.

SFS Exchange Programs

The SFS offers several exchange programs with GU-Q, the most prominent being the [semester-long exchange](#) program in Qatar, followed by the five-week [summer exchange](#) program. Students enroll in GU-Q courses with GU-Q students and grades earned are factored into the student’s Georgetown GPA. Both programs are also [available](#) for GU-Q students who wish to spend a semester or summer at GU’s [D.C. campus](#).

Bridging Capitals: DC and Doha

Another exchange program is the [Bridging Capitals](#): DC and Doha course, a four-credit seminar focusing on the political and cultural contexts of Washington, D.C., and Doha. [The course](#) is “bi-local,” with students focusing on the same topics, lectures and content, only at different times. Students also travel during spring break—D.C. students visit Doha and GU-Q students visit D.C.—to produce a final, joint portfolio project. American students “[visited](#) key institutions such as the Georgetown University in Qatar campus and the Al-Jazeera headquarters.” The D.C. seminar instructor is [Elizabeth Stephen](#), who is also in charge of organizing the D.C. students’ visit to Doha. The GU-Q course instructor is [Robert Lawsv](#), the associate director of GU-Q’s SFS library.

Global Classroom Experience

An additional exchange program is the [Global Classroom Experience](#), which consists of shared courses that link classrooms across D.C. and Doha through live video conferencing so that students from both campuses can participate in real-time discussions and joint assignments. The initiative was launched in 2015 by GU-Q SFS Dean James Reardon-Anderson. Past seminars focused on [topics](#) such as Race, Power and Justice, Causes of War, and Quantitative Methods.

The fall 2025 seminar is titled [Global American Studies Exchange](#) and part of the seminar description is as follows: “a foundational concept in American Studies scholarship: empire. Using the relationship between the United States and the Middle East as a representative case study, we will examine the cultural and political mechanisms behind global American power in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Primary and secondary source readings will range widely, surveying topics such as colonialism and sovereignty, immigration and migration, liberation and resistance.” The course framing appears biased, reflecting a conventional post-colonial critique of U.S. global influence that aligns with Qatar’s preference for promoting narratives emphasizing and criticizing Western imperialism and power over local agency.

The principal instructor of the course in D.C. is the Hubert J. Cloke Endowed Director of the American Studies Program at GU [Brian Hochman](#). In February 2025, Hochman [participated](#) in a “faculty visitor” program at GU-Q, where he delivered the talk “Global American Studies: What It Is and Why It Matters.”

The Doha instructor of the course is [Sarah Gualtieri](#), a professor of history and American studies at GU-Q. Gualtieri is known for her pro-Palestinian activism, especially at the University of Southern California (USC), where she worked until August 2024 before joining GU-Q. She was one of the founders of USC’s Faculty for Justice in Palestine and throughout 2023 was one of the leading figures at the USC anti-Israel protests. She [stated](#), “we embodied—literally—the resistance to a warmongering regime, the indiscriminate use of collective punishment, and the billions of US dollars that shored up a genocide against a besieged Indigenous people.” In November 2023, a group of pro-Israel students sued Gualtieri for alleged antisemitic statements she made in an academic setting in support of the Palestinian cause. A Palestine Legal staff attorney [defended](#) her case and in July 2024, USC dismissed the complaint.



Sarah Gualtieri. Source: [GU-Q Website](#)

DC-Doha Dialogue

GU also offers the [DC-Doha Dialogue](#), an initiative that includes short immersive [exchanges](#) with a small cohort of students from each campus traveling to the other campus for a week to participate in joint seminars, site visits, service projects or thematic programming, such as the 2024 People for Others and Social Justice program.

During previous exchanges, students participated in a range of [service project visits](#), including to the National Museum of African American History and Culture, the United States Holocaust Memorial

Museum, and the Museum of the Palestinian People. They also met with [Adnan Syed](#) from Georgetown's Prison Justice Initiative and GU Imam Yahya Hendi. Syed is a Baltimore man who was convicted in 1999 for the murder of his ex-girlfriend. His conviction was vacated in 2022, reinstated in 2023, and as of 2025, he works with Georgetown University's Prison and Justice Initiative as a program associate advocating for criminal justice reform. Since Syed's story became viral following the popular podcast, *Serial*, there has been [discussion](#) about the potential of Syed's Muslim faith and Pakistani-American identity playing a role in his case and conviction.

The Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding (ACMCU)

The Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding ([ACMCU](#)) was established in 1993 as the Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding within GU's SFS. In 2005, Saudi Prince Al-Waleed bin Talal gave \$20 million to ACMCU to promote "interfaith understanding and the study of Islam and the Muslim world" and therefore it was renamed in his honor. According to an [ISGAP report](#), "Prince Alwaleed is known for his strong anti-Zionist sentiments, and he once tweeted, "I have not and will not visit Jerusalem or pray inside it until its liberation from the Zionist enemy."

ACMCU's Goal and Qatari Influence

ACMCU ostensibly works to foster Muslim-Christian relations and "understanding." However, most of the courses [focus](#) on Islam and [issues](#) related to the Arab world and the Middle East, e.g., Health, Law, and Islam, The Islamic World, Israel & Palestine, Muslim Women & the West, Saudi Arabia at a Crossroads. Christianity is discussed in the context of its relationship to Islam or other religions: e.g., Majoritarianism and Minority Rights in South Asia.

In recent years, Qatari influence on ACMCU has become significant. For example, two [Qatari-endowed chairs](#)—the Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani Chair in Muslim Societies and the Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani Chair in the History of Islam—are housed within ACMCU.

ACMCU faculty includes [Josef Waleed Meri](#), who served as visiting fellow at GU-Q from 2018-2023 and a [consultant](#) to the Qatar Foundation in 2024. Meri is a Palestinian-American scholar specializing in the history of Muslim-Christian intersections, with a specific interest in Palestinian history and culture. As Meri himself [reported](#), his early professional experiences included a Fulbright scholarship in "Israel/Palestine" in 1992 and academic work on the "Arab-Israeli conflict."



At GU-Q, he [teaches](#) courses such as Palestinian Writers and Literature, and Muslim-Christian and Jewish Relationship in Palestine Before 1948. In an [interview](#) released for the Qatar Foundation, Meri claimed, "we should consider establishing programs at high schools and at universities, and at elementary school level, where greater awareness of Palestinian culture and society." These examples show how Qatar plays a direct role

Josef Waleed Meri. Source: [GU Website](#)

in shaping the scholarship on Muslim history and society that is researched and taught both at the ACMCU and at GU as a whole, and then promoted outside of the academic halls to permeate the impressionable young minds at schools and other academic institutions across the United States.

ACMCU Fellow Bias and Anti-Americanism

ACMCU's fellows list also includes several scholars with direct ties to Qatar and Qatari institutions, including: [Emad Shahin](#), former dean of the College of Islamic Studies (CIS) at Qatar's Hamad bin Khalifa University, who praised the Hamas-led October 7 massacres, [calling them](#) “the change we long for”; [Osman Bin Bakar](#), who served as advisor and consultant to various international academic and professional organizations and institutions, including UNESCO and the Qatar Foundation; and [Farhan Mujahid Chak](#), who worked at the United Nations, the Canadian Parliament, TRT World, Qatar University, and Al Jazeera.



Emad Shahin. Source: [GU Website](#)

Since its inception and until now, ACMCU has provided a platform for Islamist sympathizers who criticize U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East, promote anti-Western views, and express strong anti-Israel sentiments that often veer into antisemitism.

Nader Hashemi is ACMCU's director and an associate professor of Middle East and Islamic Politics at the SFS. Hashemi is a longstanding anti-Zionist advocate.

Following the Hamas-led October 7 massacre, Hashemi downplayed or absolved Hamas's responsibility for the attacks and the subsequent war that followed. In a reply to a post by Mouin Rabbani, Hashemi [criticized](#) the U.S. for always blaming Hamas or Iran instead of Israel in the Israel-Hamas conflict. In another post, he [complained](#) that Hamas was banned for killing 1,200 Israeli citizens on October 7, while Israel's Likud party faced no international sanctions. He also [referred](#) to the Palestinian Authority as “collaborators” for their intention to fight Hamas for control over Gaza.



Nader Hashemi. Source: [GU Website](#)

During a 2015 lecture, he [claimed](#) that Hamas's existence was necessary for the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict and downplayed the Hamas Charter's call for the annihilation of the Jewish people, saying that the call was “irrelevant” to the conflict being resolved.

These sentiments and statements are concerning considering that Hashemi leads ACMCU and [teaches](#) several courses on Israel, the Israel-Hamas War and Gaza, such as Gaza: History, Politics and Ethics, Israel & Palestine and Modern Islamic Political Thought.

Notably, [Gaza: History, Politics and Ethics](#) is a bi-local course taught simultaneously at GU and GU-Q.

According to the course [description](#), its “goal is to introduce students to the relevant historical, political, and moral context of the humanitarian crisis in Gaza with the aim of illuminating the controversy that surrounds this topic.” Hashemi’s course Israel & Palestine [claims](#) to offer tools to “objectively understand this ongoing global divide over the Israel/Palestine Conflict” and to address such questions as “can this chasm be bridged, and to what extent is American Middle East Policy a factor in perpetuating this conflict?”

But considering how Hashemi has spoken about these issues in the past, it is doubtful that he keeps his own anti-Israel bias and views about the U.S. out of the classroom.

ACMU’s Antisemitism

ACMU has become a key platform for advancing anti-Israel narratives at Georgetown University, regularly hosting conferences, lectures, and public events centered on Gaza.

What is particularly troubling is that Georgetown University in Qatar repeatedly appears as a co-sponsor of these events in Washington, D.C. This persistent partnership raises serious questions about the extent of Qatar’s influence over the university’s academic agenda and student environment, and the ideological environment shaping discourse on the main campus.

For example, every year ACMCU hosts the Gaza Lecture Series, focusing on several aspects of the Israel-Hamas War with a clear anti-Israel bias. Speakers in 2024 [included](#) prominent anti-Israel and anti-Zionist figures including UN Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese, Pulitzer Prize-winning author Nathan Thrall, and former U.S. Campaign for Palestinian Rights (USCPR) Director Yousef Munayyer. The 2025 series [included](#) the executive director of the Institute for Palestine Studies-USA, Jehad Abusalim.



The banner for The Gaza Lecture Series features the title 'The Gaza Lecture Series' in large, bold, white letters. Below the title are logos for SFS (Prince Alwaleed bin Talal Center for Middle Eastern Understanding), Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University (seal), SFS African Studies Program, Georgetown University College of Arts & Sciences, and Department of Theology and Religious Studies. Below the logos is a grid of five speaker portraits. The left column contains two portraits: a woman and a man in a suit. The right column contains three portraits: a man in a blue shirt, a man in a cap, and a man in a dark shirt. Below the grid, there are four event descriptions with dates, locations, and speakers:

- PALESTINIAN ANTICOLONIAL NATIONAL LIBERATION IN THE PRESENT**
February 10 at Noon | CCAS Boardroom
Dr. Anerood Al-Hardan (Howard University)
- RIGHITNG WRONGS: REFLECTIONS ON BATTLING ABUSIVE GOVERNMENTS**
February 25 at Noon | Copley Formal Lounge & [Zoom](#)
Kenneth Roth (Princeton University)
- POPULATION TRANSFER FROM GAZA: A SHORT HISTORY FROM 1948 TO 2025**
March 18 at Noon | CCAS Boardroom & [Zoom](#)
Dr. Jehad Abusalim (Institute for Palestine Studies)
- THE GAZA GENOCIDE AND THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE**
April 25th at Noon | Lohrfink Auditorium & [Zoom](#)
Dr. Saree Makdisi (UCLA)
- BEING JEWISH AFTER THE DESTRUCTION OF GAZA: A RECKONING**
April 29 at Noon | Lohrfink Auditorium & [Zoom](#)
Peter Beinart (City University of New York)

At the bottom right, there is a QR code with the text 'Scan to RSVP' above it. The bottom left contains the text 'Majority events hybrid • Lunch will be provided • Phone: 202-687-8375'.

Source: [GU Website](#)

Following the Hamas attack on October 7, 2023, ACMCU systematically engaged in trying to absolve Hamas of its actions and justify the atrocities. For example, on October 19, 2023, ACMCU hosted journalist Amira Hass for a public lecture on the “Israel Gaza War” in which she [referred](#) to the terror

attack on Israeli towns and communities, which claimed the lives of thousands of Israeli, American, and other foreign civilians, as “a daring … brave attack on Israeli military installations” and minimized Israeli losses by claiming, “this is the first thing that was clear that it was military installations and they are Israeli casualties but I assume that these are, you know, soldiers or people—I mean no imaginable number of casualties when you talk about a military clash.”

In March 2024, ACMCU hosted the lecture “[What Was Hamas Thinking?](#)” by Al Shabaka director Tareq Baconi, who essentially justified the October 7, 2023, attack and referred to it as Hamas does as the “Al Aqsa Flood”:

“Al Aqsa flood operation was a bloody display of anti-colonial violence. The operation cannot but be seen as a response to Israel’s relentless and interminable provocation through land theft, military occupation, blockage, and siege, and the denial of the fundamental right to return to one’s homeland for more than 75 years.”

On May 3, 2024, ACMCU, its project the Bridge Initiative, and the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies at Georgetown jointly signed a [letter](#) endorsing the Gaza encampments, writing that “we salute the beautiful idealism, courage and self-sacrifice of students in America today who have mobilized to stop a US-backed genocide in Gaza.” On the same day, ACMCU hosted a lecture on “[Palestine, Palestinians, Denialism, and the Question of Genocide](#),” where speaker and University of California, Berkeley, professor Ussama Makdisi publicly invited students to join the GU Encampment. Makdisi also tried to [justify](#) Hamas’s actions:

“[A]ll this before October 7th—how then to explain the continuing and continued overwhelming Western State and media support for Israel’s quote ‘right to defend itself’ after Palestinian guerillas broke out of the ghetto of Gaza and attacked and killed Israeli soldiers, police, armed settlers, and, yes, civilians as well and committed atrocities on 7 October 2023. How to explain not just the erasure of crucial Palestinian context, but its substitution by another historical narrative that entirely vacates Palestinian history and humanity.”

On October 8, 2024, ACMCU hosted a [Public Forum](#) on Israel-Gaza: One Year Later at which former USCPR executive director Yousef Munayyer downplayed Hamas’s responsibilities by putting the October 7 attack “in context.” He said, “think about October 6th and the period that precedes it and where we were.” He also blamed the Israelis for framing the massacre as a “pogrom”:

“I’m not saying there’s only one way of interpreting it. I’m not saying that Israelis should not mourn their dead in that way. But it also prevents them from thinking about contextualizing it through frameworks such as a colonial struggle and, uh, and understand how the, this pressure cooker of Gaza exploded on October 7 and contextualize it in a different way. So this is where I always tell my students of the phonetic resemblance between a prism and a prison.”

ACMCU and K-12 Education in the U.S.

ACMCU conducts professional development workshops on Muslim history and culture for K-12 teachers in U.S. public schools. Given ACMCU’s pronounced ideological orientation and anti-Israel bias, these

initiatives harbor significant risks of promoting politicized, antisemitic, and anti-American perspectives in educational settings rather than balanced, academically rigorous instruction.

The workshop director is [Susan Douglass](#), an American-born Muslim who graduated from GU with a degree in Arab Studies and is affiliated with the Council on Islamic Education. She is known for advocating anti-Israel viewpoints. In 2023, she participated in the workshop “Erasing Palestine from U.S. School Curricula,” at which she [complained](#) about American public schools failing to accomplish “the mandate of teaching the skills supposed to be given to students.” In 2024, Douglass [wrote](#) about her workshop experience for CCAS at GU and noted that it included training students on how to advocate for the Palestinian cause.

In 2023, ACMCU [hosted](#) workshops for Montgomery County public school teachers in Maryland and at the Smithsonian Arab American National Museum in Dearborn, Michigan. While the stated theme of the training was Arab American Heritage, the sessions focused almost entirely on Palestinian authors, prominently highlighting recurring anti-Israel themes such as occupation, resistance, and displacement. [Accounts](#) of the event claim the suggested reading list for teachers included writings by the founder of the U.S.-designated terrorist organization the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), Ghassan Kanafani, or Palestinian author Adania Shibli, who has [stated](#), “I don’t want a Palestinian state, or a state of Israel- I don’t want either. I don’t want any states, actually.”

The Bridge Initiative at GU

The Bridge Initiative at Georgetown University is a multi-year research project founded in 2015 and housed in ACMCU. It defines its [mission](#) as producing accessible, evidence-based research to “protect pluralism” and to study and counter what it calls “Islamophobia.” Research showed that the Alwaleed Center [accepted](#) \$1 million from the International Institute for Islamic Thought (IIIT) in 2017 for the establishment of the Bridge Initiative.

Connections to Terror-Tied Groups and Promotion of Anti-Western Sentiments

IIIT, which donated money to help create the Bridge Initiative, has been under FBI scrutiny over alleged [links](#) to the Muslim Brotherhood and donated at least \$50,000 to the World Islam Study Enterprise, a think tank run by Sami Al-Arian, a [convicted](#) financier for the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) who was deported from the United States in 2006.

The Bridge Initiative’s founder and director, John Esposito, is a controversial figure [tied](#) to terror-linked individuals and groups like Sami Al-Arian, the Muslim Brotherhood, and IIIT. Esposito’s central claim across his scholarship is that Western societies frequently misrepresent Islam and that Islamist movements should be analyzed in terms of socio-political grievances rather than inherent religious militancy.

A [study](#) published in 2024 by A.J. Caschetta contends that Esposito’s academic platform sometimes overlaps with groups that have been linked by U.S. authorities to controversial political agendas, demonstrating the absence of a boundary between scholarly neutrality and ideological advocacy and even radicalism. In his scholarship and public commentary, Esposito often critiques Western policy, portraying U.S. and Israeli actions as contributing to political unrest in Muslim societies. For example, in his

analysis of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Esposito has characterized Palestinian suicide bombings as consequences of Israeli policy, downplaying the role of Islamism and terror organizations in radicalization.

A Bridge Initiative senior fellow since 2017, Farid Hafez is an Austrian Muslim scholar and a controversial figure with undisclosed ties with terror organizations. In November 2020, he was detained as part of Operation Luxor, the largest counterterrorism operation ever conducted in Austria, over his alleged affiliation with the Muslim Brotherhood. In January 2023, the Higher Regional Court in Graz dropped the charges based on the government's lack of proof, but highlighted that "Hafez is an Islamist provocateur who pushes the narrative of 'Muslim victimhood' and tries to silence his critics by branding them as 'Islamophobes.'"

Hafez is best known for serving as editor of the annual *European Islamophobia Report*, produced with the backing of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoan, which depicts Europe as the primary source and stronghold of "Islamophobia." In April 2024, EU Member of the European Parliament Monika Hohlmeier voiced her concern that Hafez may have attempted to obtain EU funding for a research project through the CLAIM Alliance, an umbrella organization allegedly linked to the Muslim Brotherhood. Hafez is also a fellow of the Istanbul-based Turkish Center for Islam and Global Affairs (CIGA), established by convicted PIJ financier Sami Al-Arian. Hafez defined Hamas's October 7 terrorists as "fighters" and blamed European governments who "largely criticize Hamas for its attack while endorsing the Israeli killing of Palestinian civilians."



Farid Hafez. Source: [The Bridge Initiative Website](#)

The Bridge Initiative's Agenda

Several of MEF's project directors claim that "Qatar established GU's Bridge Initiative to "identify what they call Islamophobic networks around the West," using "Qatari patronage" to employ Islamists and "push Islamism." Indirectly, GU's initiative helps "spread radicalism and antisemitism through the country."

The Bridge Initiative has contributed to shaping and propagating a pro-Qatar narrative in the U.S. In December 2022, it published an article, "Western Double Standards & 2022 FIFA Qatar World Cup," arguing that criticism over Qatar's hosting of the 2022 FIFA World Cup overlooked the allegedly severe human rights violations in Western and other non-Muslim countries, thereby suggesting a hypocritical "double standard" in Western media and policymaking. The piece omits detailed scrutiny of Qatar's documented abuses, effectively whitewashing the host country's human rights record in favor of shifting blame onto so-called "Western hypocrisy."

The Bridge Initiative publishes scholarly reports, factsheets, a daily "Today in Islamophobia" digest, essays, and videos aimed at journalists, educators, and policymakers. Its scholars consistently claim

opposition between Islam and the West and rely on classic “postcolonial” sentiments and theories. For example, the Initiative’s 2024 [report](#), “Israel-Palestine: Mapping Islamophobia on Facebook by U.S. Presidential Candidates,” presents Western institutions and U.S. politics primarily as advocates of prejudicial views. By emphasizing terms such as “structural racism,” “colonial legacy,” and “imperial continuities,” the authors adopt a postcolonial vocabulary that portrays Western democracies as inherently suspect in their treatment of Muslims, leaving little or no room for counterexamples, accounts of interfaith collaboration, or Muslim civic participation in the U.S.

Bridge Initiative scholars, especially John Esposito and Farid Hafez, frame “Islamophobia” as a systemic feature of Western governance and public culture. In multiple essays, Hafez echoes political scientist Achille Mbembe who [says](#) “Islamophobia” is “an extension of the global colonial expansion based on the colonial heritage to classify people, put them into hierarchies and differentiate between them.” Such framing portrays Western modernity and advancement as central sources of anti-Muslim hostility.

By treating Western cultural and political structures as engines of exclusion, the Bridge Initiative’s work appears to suggest that Muslim belonging in the West is precarious and conditional. The rhetorical focus on “hostility,” “fear,” and “dehumanization” reinforces perceptions of incompatibility between Islam and Western civic culture—the very dichotomy the project claims to dismantle.

The Bridge Initiative’s associate director [Mobashra Tazamal](#) holds an M.A. in Islamic Societies and Cultures from the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London and serves as a contributor in outlets such as The New Arab, Al Jazeera, and Middle East Eye. Her scholarship exhibits anti-Israel discourse and critical stances towards Western countries. In a piece published on The New Arab, she [blamed](#) the “insidious bigotry in the United States and the Western world over the past several decades, now deployed once again to delegitimize any sympathy, let alone solidarity or intervention to stop the war: Islamophobia.” During the July 2025 House Committee on Education and the Workforce hearing, GU Interim President Robert Groves was [asked](#) about Tazamal’s anti-Israeli activity on social media, particularly about a tweet in which she claimed that “Israel has been recreating Auschwitz in Gaza for two years.”

GU & GU-Q Joint Masters in Diplomacy and International Affairs

In October 2021, Joel Hellman, dean of the Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown, and Abdulaziz Bin Mohammed Al-Horr, the director of the Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs Diplomatic Institute, met in Washington to [inaugurate](#) a new one-year executive master’s program in Diplomacy and International Affairs (EMDIA) at GU.

EMDIA is open to highly qualified Qatari diplomats nominated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Qatari officials engaged in foreign or national security policy nominated by their other government ministries, and other practitioners from the Middle East nominated by their governments. The year-long [program](#) consists of nine modules—each consisting of two intensive courses—and one capstone visit to D.C. The modules are taught onsite at the Georgetown University in Qatar campus by faculty affiliated with Georgetown’s D.C. campus who visit Doha for a five-day teaching residency. The tenth module consists

of a four-day capstone visit to Georgetown's D.C. campus and includes sessions with GU faculty members and meetings with policymakers and representatives of international institutions.

The GU School of Foreign Service also offers the executive master's in Diplomacy and International Affairs-Asia Pacific, a one-year executive master's [program](#) designed for mid-career professionals in the Asia-Pacific. The degree is based on a multi-location model, with students studying at GU SFS's newest branch in Jakarta, at GU-Q in Doha, and in Washington. The program is organized around three distinct [modules](#) taught across the three SFS branches. The fall semester is held in Indonesia, where participants focus on issues related to Asia-Pacific diplomacy, followed by a one-week module on Middle Eastern geopolitics and energy diplomacy at GU-Q in Doha. Finally, spring semester is held at GU in D.C.

The teaching scholar at GU-Q is [Rory Miller](#), a Dublin native who serves as professor of International Politics, director of the Small States Research Program, and director of Energy Studies Program at GU-Q. From 2019-2024, he was the lead principal investigator on a Qatar National Research Fund multi-year research project on Managing National Security Risk During and After the Blockade: Strategic Challenges and Opportunities for Qatar's Energy Sector. Since 2024, he has [led](#) a three-year Qatar Research, Development and Innovation Council (QRDI) project: The Maritime Sector and Resilience-building in a Small State: The Qatar Case Study.



Rory Miller. Source: [GU Website](#)

Miller's work often emphasizes the role of anti-Zionist sentiment in European and Irish politics, as well as the historical effects of Western imperialism on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. For example, in his book *Divided Against Zion*, Miller [examines](#) opposition to the establishment of a Jewish state in Britain. In *Inglorious Disarray*, he [argues](#) that European engagement with the Palestinian issue is marred by a lack of coherence and competing national interests, suggesting that Europe's policies have sometimes contributed to instability rather than resolution. He has also [analyzed](#) how Ireland's own national identity and postcolonial history informs its strong solidarity with the Palestinians, arguing that Ireland views the Palestinian struggle through a lens of shared colonial experience.

Executive Master's in Leadership - Qatar

The Qatar Leadership Center, Qatar University, and Georgetown University's McDonough School of Business offer an executive master's in leadership-Qatar ([EML-Q](#)). EML-Q's director is GU Professor [Bardia Kamrad](#), who served as associate dean of the McDonough School of Business at GU.

The program started in 2018 and is [designed](#) exclusively for Qatar Leadership Center graduates to become professionals who will work for the Qatar National Vision 2030, the strategic development plan launched in 2008 to transform Qatar into an advanced country capable of sustainable development. The degree is [accredited](#) by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), one of the

three American business program accreditors. To graduate, students must submit a [capstone project](#) relating to “Qatar’s National interest for leadership and growth,” to be implemented within the Qatar National Vision 2030. The program lasts 10 months and, upon completion, graduates receive an international master’s degree that is recognized worldwide.

Courses are taught in Doha by GU scholars and participants also [spend](#) a week in D.C., where they visit Congress, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

This program further demonstrates how the relationship between GU and Qatar goes well beyond cultural and academic influence, revealing a pattern of exploitation, as GU’s expertise, experience, and research are directed towards serving Qatar’s national and international development plan.

GU-Q Programs

GU-Q manages a curriculum that situates the Middle East as a complex region of historical, political, cultural, and environmental significance. Students are exposed to classic state politics and history, media, culture, environment, language, and civil society. Yet within this broad framework, there is a notable emphasis on Israel/Palestinians/Gaza, which seemed to exist well before October 7, 2023. Repeated programming, including events, conferences, speaker series, workshops demonstrate how GU-Q treats Israel/Palestinian as a flagship issue, rather than a marginal one. While many courses cover general Middle East themes (e.g., [Middle East Civilization](#), Gulf Security, Media in the Middle East), the Israel/Palestinian component tends to appear in public events, short modules, and visiting fellow seminars, rather than in the mainstream semester-long, full-credit courses.

The Certificate in Arab and Regional Studies (CARS)

The Certificate in Arab and Regional Studies ([CARS](#)) is designed “to provide students with a broad interdisciplinary understanding of the Arab and Islamic worlds,” with an emphasis on regional history and current issues. Sample electives include HIST 1601: Middle East I, HIST 1602: Middle East II, INAF 3271: Media in the Middle East, HIST 4607: Islamic Law and Gender. The Arabic Language Program and Minor [offers](#) both language proficiency and thematic courses such as ARAB 2261 Inside Arabic: How it Works, ARAB 2270 Variations in Standard Arabic and Dialects, and ARAB 3393 Arabic Sociolinguistics.

The International Politics (IPOL) major includes course such as IPOL 3394 - [Islamic Movements](#), coordinated by Abdullah Al-Arian, the son of convicted PIJ financier Sami Al-Arian. The course [focuses](#) on the history of Islamic terror movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood, Al Qaeda, Hamas, and Hezbollah, but presents them through a sympathetic lens, highlighting their “organizational capacity and ability to mobilize supporters as movements of opposition.”

Course catalogue and library guides show additional [offerings](#) such as GOVT 4417: Politics and Society in the Gulf, IPOL 3380: Gulf Security in the Contemporary Era, ANTH 2233: Qatari Ethnography, and INAF 1810: Water & Climate Crisis (with regional/Gulf focus).

Palestine Programming

Beyond the standard courses, GU-Q hosts numerous public events and conferences that expand and deepen regional engagement. Key examples include the [November 2023 Hiwaraat](#) event “Sustaining the Oasis: Envisioning the Future of Water Security in the Gulf” and the December 2023 “[Global Energy Cultures](#)” forum focused on water/energy infrastructure in the Gulf region and environmental/ecological challenges. Another example is the [September 2023 Hiwaraat](#) conference “Global Histories and Practices of Islamophobia,” which explored “Islamophobia” globally and regionally. [Speakers](#) included former South African Ambassador to the United States Ebrahim Rassol, a leading advocate for South Africa’s decision to file a case against Israel at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in December 2023, and Al Jazeera English executive producer and daughter of Sami Al-Arian, Laila Al-Arian.

The programming around Israel/Palestinians frequently employs stereotypical “human rights,” “settler-colonial,” and “accountability” frameworks to discuss alleged apartheid, genocide, and the BDS (boycott, divestment, sanctions) movement. The institutional repetition of these narratives raises questions about balance and plurality of perspectives.

GU-Q programming on Israel/Palestinians includes:

- The Hiwaraat symposium “On Palestine,” March 2024 – The event featured panels on justice and accountability, global media narratives, and political futures of Palestine. Speakers included Diana Buttu and Hussam Zomlot.
- The Palestine Speaker Series event “[Israel’s War on Palestinians: Gaza as Epicenter](#),” January 2024 – The [program](#) featured Al Shabaka director Tareq Baconi and covered “Hamas’s calculus for its attack on October 7” and how “Palestine generally, and the Gaza Strip specifically, is the lynchpin of any imagined decolonial future.”
- The Hiwaraat conference “[Reimagining Palestine](#),” September 2024 – The conference featured Wadah Khanfar, who according to the Palestinian Raya Media Network “was [active](#) in the Hamas movement and was one of its most prominent leaders in the movement’s office in Sudan. GU-Q also hosted Khanfar in March 2024 for a conference titled “[On Palestine](#)” with Mehdi Hasan, a prominent critic of Israel who interviewed Khanfar.
- “[Writing Palestine](#),” March 2025 – The event was hosted jointly by GU-Q and the Palestine Festival of Literature and featured Mohammed El-Kurd, a prominent Palestinian activist hired in 2021 as the Palestine Correspondent by the left-wing magazine, *The Nation*. El-Kurd [vilifies](#) Zionism and Zionists. In September 2024, he [posted](#) his wish that “every single Zionist perish.” On October 7, 2023, El-Kurd justified Hamas’s massacre on X, suggesting it was an act of “retaliation” or a response to Israeli aggression.

However, GU-Q’s efforts to cast Israel as an aggressor in the Middle East were apparent well before October 7, as seen by the following programming:

- Palestine Speaker Series: “[Israel’s Apartheid Against Palestinians](#),” March 2023 – The program was hosted by GU-Q and featured Human Rights Watch Israel and Palestine director and prominent BDS advocate, [Omar Shakir](#). In 2023, Shakir also [served](#) as a visiting fellow at GU-Q, where he taught a one-credit course titled Mightier than the Sword? The Human Rights Challenge to Israel’s Apartheid and a workshop for students interested in anti-Israel advocacy centered on Human Rights Fact-Finding and Documentation.

- “[Exploring Palestine Past and Present](#),” February 2023 – GU-Q hosted the discussion featuring Zeina Jallad and Salim Tamari. [Zeina Jallad](#) is the director of the Palestine Land Studies Center and an assistant professor of international law at the American University of Beirut. [Salim Tamari](#) is a Palestinian sociologist who served as the director of the Beirut-based Institute of Palestine Studies and a GU-Q visiting fellow.
- “[Walled Off](#),” Spring 2023 – GU-Q hosted the regional premiere of the documentary, which frames the separation barrier between Israel and the West Bank exclusively through Palestinian perspectives and portrays Israel as an “aggressor.”

GU-Q Disturbing Connections and Personnel

The Al-Arian Family and Georgetown University

The Al-Arian family has maintained several academic and professional connections to Georgetown University and GU-Q, primarily through faculty appointments and scholarly collaborations.

- **Sami Amin Al-Arian:** Al-Arian was born in Kuwait in 1958 to Palestinian parents. He is a computer engineer and political activist who worked as a professor at the University of South Florida (USF) until 2003, when he was [indicted](#) in the United States on charges of providing support to the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ). After a six-month federal trial in 2005 ended largely in acquittal or hung verdicts, he entered a plea agreement in 2006 to one count of conspiracy to provide services to the organization, for which he was sentenced to 57 months in prison with credit for time served. Following extended legal proceedings, he was deported from the United States to Turkey in 2015.



Sami Al-Arian. Source: [GU Website](#)

Since 2015, Al-Arian has lived and worked abroad, [directing](#) the Center for Islam and Global Affairs (CIGA) in Istanbul and participating in conferences across the Middle East. Analysts and policy commentators have [criticized](#) CIGA, arguing that its scholarship and public events align with or provide platforms for Islamist and terrorists groups. In the past, CIGA has repeatedly [hosted](#) high-level Hamas figures—including Osama Hamdan, Majed Al-Zeer, and Khalida Jarrar—giving them a platform to advance terrorist and extremist ideologies. At its 2024 Fourth International Conference on Palestine, CIGA featured speeches [praising Hamas's](#) “unapologetic jihad” and called for Israel’s destruction, signaling clear ideological alignment with a U.S.-designated terrorist organization.

Since 2017, Sami Al-Arian has been tied to GU-Q. That year, GU-Q’s Middle Eastern Studies Student Association [invited](#) him to lecture on youth and leadership in the Middle East. Notably,

his criminal and terrorist records were completely whitewashed in the event description. In 2021, Sami Al-Arian was one of the editors of the Bridge Initiative's [report](#) "The Terror Trap: The Impact of the War on Terror on Muslim Communities since 9/11."

- **Laila Al-Arian:** Laila, Sami's [daughter](#), works as an American journalist and documentary producer at Al Jazeera English. Al Jazeera is owned, funded, and effectively controlled by Qatar's royal Al-Thani family. A graduate of the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, Laila has produced award-winning programs, including Al Jazeera English's investigative documentary series, *Fault Lines*. Laila's anti-Israel bias is evident not only in her work on *Fault Lines*, but also in her broader journalism and public commentary. In June 2024, she participated in The Bridge Initiative's podcast *Unpacking Islamophobia*, in which she [criticized](#) Western media for "disseminating unverified sensationalist allegations ... based on misinformation, disinformation, or straight-up propaganda campaigns," arguing that Israeli narratives are too readily amplified.



Laila Al-Arian. Source: [GU-Q Website](#)

- **Jonathan A. C. Brown:** [Brown](#), Laila Al-Arian's husband, is an American scholar of Islamic studies who holds the Alwaleed bin Talal Chair of Islamic Civilization in Georgetown University's Walsh School of Foreign Service. He is a convert to Islam and previously served as director of the GU's ACMCU. In June 2025, during the Israel-Iran War, Brown was [removed](#) as chair and put on leave after a post on X [expressing](#) hope for Iran to launch a "symbolic strike" on American military bases. GU's 2026 course catalogue includes several courses by Brown, potentially indicating his reinstatement.



Jonathan Brown. Source: [GU Website](#)

One of his scheduled courses is ARAB-4650-01 War on Terror at Home, which reinforces the image of the U.S. as hostile toward Muslims: "The conception of America as a pluralistic and liberal nation has collided with claims of cultural, religious and even racial parochialism. Muslims in the US and shibboleths associated with them, from the 'Ground Zero Mosque' (2010) to Rep. Ilhan Omar's hijab and campus protests over Gaza, have been the meeting point of all these tensions and crises. This course will [explore](#) how 'The War on Terror,' its domestic manifestation, Islam/Muslims and debates over what America should have shaped the US in recent decades."

In the spring 2026, Brown is expected to teach the course ARAB-4417-01 [Shariah Law & its Discontents](#), which criticizes how Shariah is "contested today."

- **Abdullah Al-Arian:** [Abdullah](#) is Sami's son and a historian of the modern Middle East and Islamic social movements. He earned his Ph.D. from GU in 2011 and currently serves as associate professor of history and chair of the International History Department at GU-Q. He is [co-editor](#) of *Jadaliyya*'s "Critical Currents in Islam" page and a frequent contributor to Al Jazeera English and its website. He [authored](#) the book *Answering the Call: Popular Islamic Activism in Sadat's Egypt*, which whitewashes the history of the Muslim Brotherhood terrorist organization, portraying it as a force that succeeded in "mobilizing educated youth and building on social networks." Similarly, in an [article](#) published on Al Jazeera English in 2017, he condemned the U.S. for President Trump's proposal to outlaw the Muslim Brotherhood, claiming that including the group in the terror list "reflects a total failure to understand the historical complexities of the group's evolution."



Abdullah Al-Arian. Source: [GU-Q Website](#)

These overlapping family and institutional relationships situate the extended Al-Arian family within a transnational scholarly network that bridges Georgetown's D.C. and Doha campuses. Abdullah Al-Arian's faculty role provides a direct academic link to GU-Q, while Jonathan Brown's endowed professorship anchors the family's presence at the main U.S. campus.

Problematic GU-Q Personnel

In recent years, GU in Washington and particularly its Walsh School of Foreign Service, has drawn sharp [criticism](#) from analysts for cultivating what some describe as a "decolonization" ethos infused with radical ideology. This ideological turn has fostered anti-Israel sentiment, framed Western power as inherently colonial, and even reportedly encouraged pro-Hamas activism among students and alumni. GU-Q appears to mirror many of the same trends, as its faculty publicly deploy anti-Western and anti-Israel concepts, evoking colonialism, imperialism, and systemic oppression in their critique of U.S. foreign policy and Israel's role in the Gaza/Palestine conflict. This is not merely academic dissent, but part of a broader ideological realignment shaped by foreign funding and a governance structure that tolerates, and perhaps even encourages, these radical intellectual currents.

- **Diana Buttu:** [Buttu](#) is a Palestinian-Canadian lawyer and a former spokesperson for the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). She will serve as practitioner in residence at GU-Q for the 2025-2026 academic year. During the 2026 spring semester, she will [teach](#) two courses: Palestine and the Law, focusing on "the British Mandate, the Nakba and the establishment of the State of Israel, the relationship of national identity to citizenship, the Israeli settler movement, the law of belligerent occupation and the law of genocide"; and [Negotiation/Organization Conflict](#), which provides participants with strategies for management negotiation and conflict resolution.

Buttu advocates an “anti-imperialist” critique. In a 2025 *Foreign Policy* [article](#), she noted that Israel’s alleged “settler population today is roughly 800,000,” and argues that “Western inaction” and lack of sanctions reflect “complicity in a regime built on dispossession.” In a 2025 *Democracy Now!* interview, Buttu [called](#) the U.S.-brokered proposal on post-war Gaza “an American version of genocide. … what we’re seeing is that the Americans … are going to rule over the lives of the people over whom they have committed this genocide.” On *Democracy Now!* in 2023, she [criticized](#) U.S. policy as enabling “the process of slowly ethnically cleansing Palestinians,” calling American support for Israel not merely political, but a “mask that enables colonial violence.”

- **Trish Kahle:** [Kahle](#) is an assistant professor of history at GU-Q. At GU-Q’s conference “Decolonizing Energy: the Past, Present and Future of Energy Justice,” she [spoke](#) about the “need for action to end colonial energy violence alongside a reimagination of energy systems not premised on exploitation, extractivism, and theft.” In an article on the American labor movement, Kahle [wrote](#): “From for-profit universities to for-profit charter schools, capitalists are turning education into a business.” In a 2017 contribution to the American socialist magazine *Jacobin*, she [discussed](#) U.S. foreign policy, writing that “if American imperialism must reckon with the changing balance of international power, it makes sense that its ruling class would turn to the oil industry for inspiration.”
- **Amira El Zein:** [El Zein](#) is an associate professor of Arabic at GU-Q. In her [article](#) “Spiritual Consumption in the United States: The Rumi Phenomenon,” she criticized “how Americans in general have a tendency to ‘play’ with the religious traditions of the world.”
- **Victoria Googasian:** [Googasian](#) is an assistant professor of American literature at GU-Q. She teaches the course [U.S. Empire Filipinx Culture](#), which focuses on “the reach of American empire and hegemony impacts, not only the lived experiences of, but also the identities of the Filipinx diaspora” and challenges students with questions like, “How do Filipinx/a/o American cultural creations respond to American colonialism and empire? How does the American empire influence or subvert Filipinx American experiences?”
- **Sarah Gualtieri:** As previously mentioned, [Gualtieri](#) is a professor of history and American studies at GU-Q. She is responsible for a bi-local course given simultaneously to Georgetown’s Doha and D.C. students that [focuses](#) on “a foundational concept in American Studies scholarship: empire. Using the relationship between the United States and the Middle East as a representative case study, we will examine the cultural and political mechanisms behind global American power in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.”
- **Omar Khalifah:** [Khalifah](#) is an associate professor of Arabic literature and culture at GU-Q. During the spring 2026 semester, he will teach the course [The Gaza Nakba: Lit & Politics](#), focusing on how “war also raises urgent questions about its implications for academic fields such as International Law, Genocide Studies, and Postcolonial theory, as well as for thinking about anticolonial struggle and the limits of armed resistance in contexts of extreme power asymmetry.”

In 2021, Khalifah, a Jordanian-Palestinian with an Israeli-issued ID, wrote an article for Al Jazeera about his trip to Bethlehem in which he claimed: “Welcome to Palestine—an open-air museum of colonialism.”

- **Firat Oruc:** Oruc is an associate teaching professor of culture and theory at GU-Q. His course Thinkers of the Global South asks students questions like, “What does it mean to ‘decolonize’ now and here? How is decoloniality constructed in and through praxis? What are some key insights and strategies of decolonial thinking? How do we decolonize knowledge as well as the methodologies and practices by which it is produced and disseminated?”

GU Collaboration with Qatar's Arab Center Washington DC

The Arab Center Washington DC (ACW) is a Washington-based nonprofit research organization that describes itself as “independent and nonpartisan” and is dedicated to improving the understanding of the Arab world and U.S.–Arab relations through policy research, commentary, and public programs. It is affiliated with the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies (ACRPS), a larger research network headquartered in Doha. Many analysts and commentators treat ACW as part of a Doha-rooted institutional ecosystem that projects research and public diplomacy from Qatar into Western policy circles.



Arab Center Washington DC
المركز العربي واشنطن دي سي

Source: [Arab Center DC Website](#)

Research shows ongoing cooperation between ACW and Georgetown that demonstrates a concrete pathway by which ideas and speakers affiliated with Doha-linked institutions enter Georgetown forums. In practice, this cooperation takes two visible forms that make the transfer of networks, political agendas and perspectives possible: personnel overlap—scholars or fellows serve at both ACW (or its Doha affiliate) and GU/GU-Q; and programmatic collaboration—webinars, panels, and speaker events where ACW and GU/GU-Q are listed as partners or co-hosts.

Personnel Overlap

- **Yousef Munayyer:** Serves as head of the Palestine/Israel Program and a senior fellow at ACW and is a GU adjunct/assistant professor at CCAS. Munayyer is a well-known anti-Israel activist and served as executive director of the U.S. Campaign for Palestinian Rights (USCPR). His social media profiles include sympathetic stances towards Hamas, such as:
 - “Nonsense. ‘Removing Hamas’ is an open-ended and counter-productive effort (you can't kill people into liking you) and is a recipe not for peace but for an open-ended excuse not to challenge Israeli apartheid. That is convenient only for those who want apartheid to continue.”
 - “It doesn't matter if Hamas exists or doesn't exist. If it holds one hostage, no hostages or 1000 hostages.”
- **Marwa Daoudy:** Sits on ACW's Academic Advisory Board and serves as a GU associate professor, Seif Ghobash chair in Arab Studies at GU CCAS, and director of Academic Programs at CCAS.
- **Daniel Brumberg:** Serves as a non-resident senior fellow at ACW, GU associate professor and co-director of the M.A. in Democracy and Governance Studies.
- **Zeidon (Zaidon) Alkinani:** Serves as an ACW non-resident fellow and adjunct lecturer at GU-Q. Also works as Head of Programs at Qatar Foundation's CEO's Office and as a contributor to Al Jazeera English, Middle East Monitor and The New Arab. Although the main focus of his scholarship is state-building processes in Iraq, over the last two years, seemingly since October 7, 2023, Alkinani has extensively published on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, sharing his clear anti-Israeli bias. A few weeks after the attacks, he blamed “Western silence and collusion with the Israeli aggression against Gaza” without mentioning Hamas. In March 2024, he criticized what he saw as the international community's failure to diplomatically isolate Israel and referred to the Israeli-state building process as “a huge theft of land that does not belong to Israel. It's a massive violation of international law.”
- **Mehran Kamrava:** Serves as the director of the Center for International and Regional Studies at GU-Q and guest speaker at ACW events. His scholarship focuses on Iranian diplomacy. During the 2025 Israel-Iran War, he claimed that “Tel Aviv, Beersheva, Haifa, they were hit and although Iran was itself hit and more than 600 Iranians were killed, nonetheless, Iran was able to inflict serious damages on Israel.” In an interview for the *Tehran Times*, he claimed that “U.S. policy toward the war has been nothing other than hypocritical” and praised “the will and determination of Palestinians to resist and fight Israel's onslaught regardless of the conditions within which they find themselves,” with no mention of Hamas's responsibility for the conflict.
- **Tamara Kharroub:** Serves as ACW deputy executive director and a senior fellow, and appears as a panelist in GU-partnered events. In June 2025, she gave a speech at the U.N. Palestinian Rights Committee, where she complained about “the active denial of any means for Palestinians to protect themselves.”

Center Washington DC

المركز العربي واشنطن



Yousef Munayyer. Source: [Arab Center DC](#)

Programmatic Collaboration

The collaboration between GU and ACW primarily involves the GU's Center for Contemporary Arab Studies and the Al Waleed bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding. The most recurrent topics covered in the programs are U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East and North Africa, democracy and governance in the Arab world, and the Israel-Hamas conflict. The following are some program examples:

- [Towards Inclusive and Democratic Governance in MENA: Challenges and Prospects](#) (CCAS-AWC)
- [Sudan's Power Struggle: Humanitarian Catastrophe, External Influences, and Ways Forward](#) (CCAS-AWC)
- [The Impact of the Gaza War on U.S. Presidential Election](#) (CCAS-AWC)
- [The 2024 Elections amid the Gaza War: The Future of U.S. Foreign Policy](#) (CCAS-AWC)
- [Inside the Arab State: A Conversation with Mehran Kamrava](#) (GU-Q-AWC)
- [Trump and the Middle East: A Second Term Review](#) (CCAS-ACMCU-AWS)

ACW's Doha affiliation, plus its direct, repeated cooperation with Georgetown, is evidence of Qatar's significant connection to and influence on Georgetown, as affiliation and partnership allow Doha-based research networks to place scholars at Georgetown events and collaborate on programming in Washington.

Conclusion

Georgetown University's two-decade partnership with the Qatar Foundation represents another complex case of foreign influence in American higher education. While the university maintains formal control over academic operations, the financial architecture of this relationship—estimated at over \$971 million—creates structural dependencies that extend far beyond the Doha campus.

The concentration of Qatari-funded positions in fields aligned with Qatar's strategic interests, combined with direct Qatari representation on Georgetown's board of directors, suggests that Qatar has meaningful influence over the university's intellectual direction, which is problematic considering that GU produces many members of the next generation of American and global diplomats, politicians, and community leaders. The prevalence of post-colonial scholarship, anti-Western critiques, and advocacy on contentious geopolitical issues—particularly regarding Israel and Palestine—within Qatari-funded programs undermines the academic independence and integrity of scholarly inquiry at one of America's premier institutions.

Georgetown and other Qatari-funded institutions in the United States should heed the warning and not continue to allow a foreign government radical goals and agenda proliferate among its campuses and students and taint the elite reputations the institutions have gained and maintained for decades and centuries.