



KEY FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

MUSLIM MILLENNIAL ATTITUDES ON RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP II

Algeria, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Oman, Qatar, Sudan, Tunisia, Yemen



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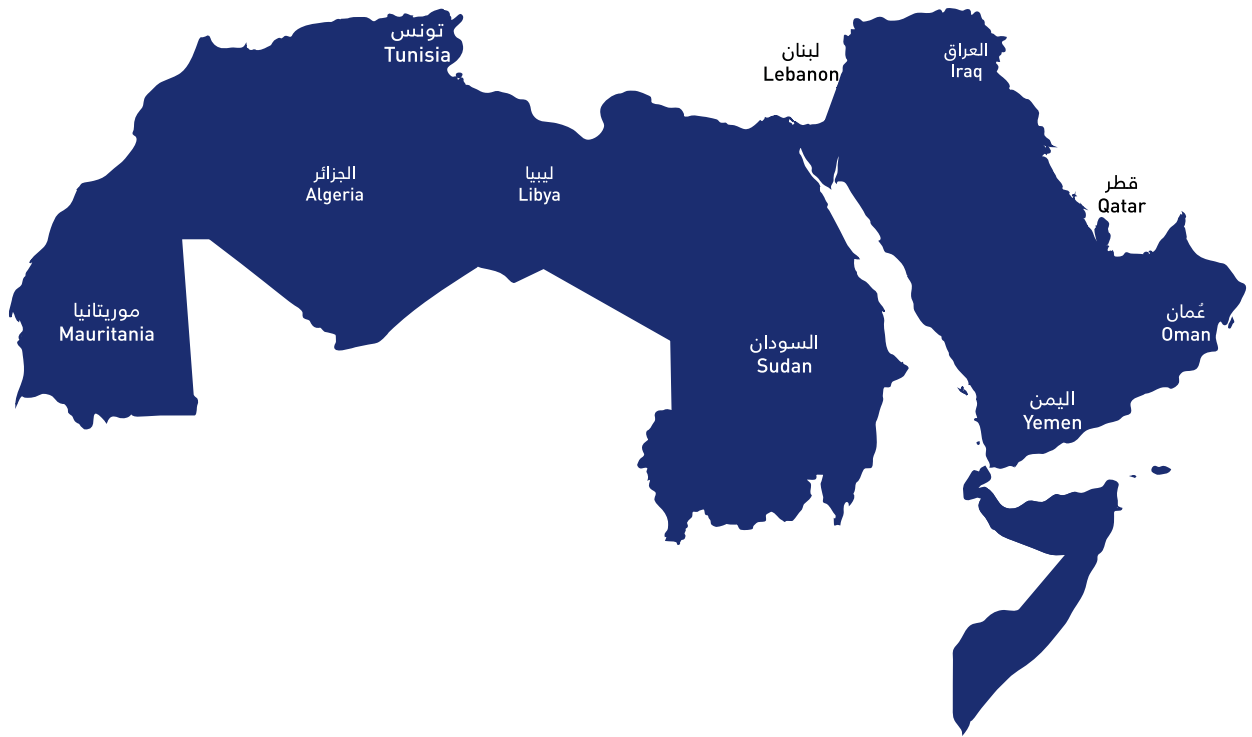
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Countries in which the survey was conducted

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Foreword

Last year we partnered with Zogby Research Services to bring the first regional survey of Arab Muslim millennial attitudes on religion and religious leadership. The interest and response was overwhelming and furthered our intent to fulfill our goal of covering the entire Arab region. This year we extended the survey to a further ten countries in the region to give a wider and more nuanced view on the diversity of religious attitudes of the Arab youth generation.

The impetus for this survey is simple. Arab youth are the region's largest demographic. They make it one of the most youthful regions in the world. Today's youth are the very people who will carry religion forward with them tomorrow. Without understanding them we cannot understand the future trajectories of religious identity and understanding, nor even the resurgence of religion that is evident around the world.

The religious attitudes of young Arabs are incredibly diverse and rouse discussion and debate. Some of these findings will challenge our preconceived notions about Arab Muslim youth while some will agree with our own personal points of view. In the end, we hope, we can stimulate dialogue and debate about religion among this generation that serves to deepen and broaden our own religious literacy in the process.

At Tabah Futures Initiative we are committed to probing and prospecting the nexus of religion, the public space, and local and global issues. At the forefront of our commitment is to explore religious identity among the Muslim millennial generation through interdisciplinary academic investigations into the conceptual issues linked to identity, while complementing these endeavours with a comprehension of the present state of affairs through surveys, focus groups, and engagement with decision makers, religious leaders and practitioners.

We would like to thank everyone who has supported our work and helped in bringing this project to fruition.

Abaas Yunas

Tabah Futures Initiative

Key Findings

Tabah Futures Initiative commissioned Zogby Research Services (ZRS) to poll Arab Muslim citizens between the ages of 15-33 in Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Mauritania, Sudan, Iraq, Lebanon, Oman, Yemen, and Qatar.

6,862 face-to-face interviews were conducted during February and March, 2017, and distributed country-wide to insure a representative sample, except in Libya, Iraq and Yemen, where conflict and political instability meant that polling was limited to non-affected areas.

In this edition of the Muslim Millennial Attitudes survey, further additional questions were included while other questions were edited for improvement. The survey's main themes—identity, devotion, religion in public, religious scholarship, and extremism remain unchanged.

1

NATIONAL IDENTITY IS THE PRIMARY IDENTITY FOR YOUNG ARABS

2

YOUNG ARABS WANT TO BE KNOWN TO OTHERS BY THEIR FAITH

3

YOUNG ARABS BELIEVE THAT NON-MUSLIM CITIZENS OF MUSLIM COUNTRIES SHOULD BE TREATED AS FULL CITIZENS WITH EQUAL RIGHTS

4

THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF ISLAM TO YOUNG ARABS ARE (1) LIVING BY ISLAMIC ETHICS AND MORALS; (2) CONCERN FOR THE POLITICAL ISSUES FACING MUSLIMS; (3) SEEKING ISLAMIC KNOWLEDGE

5

YOUNG ARABS ARE COMFORTABLE WITH RELIGIOUS COUNSEL BEING DISPENSED IN PUBLIC SPACES

6

YOUNG ARABS DO NOT BELIEVE THAT RELIGIOUS DISCOURSE CLASHES WITH THE MODERN WORLD, BUT REFORM, IF UNDERTAKEN, SHOULD BE LED BY RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS AND SCHOLARS

7

YOUNG ARABS SEE AN IMPORTANT ROLE FOR RELIGION IN THEIR COUNTRY'S FUTURE

8

FOSTERING ISLAMIC VALUES IN SOCIETY AND PROMOTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTRY ARE SEEN AS THE TWO MOST IMPORTANT RELIGIOUS DUTIES

9

YOUNG ARABS RECOGNISE MUFTIS AND ULAMA (RELIGIOUS SCHOLARS) AS HAVING THE MOST RIGHT TO ISSUE RELIGIOUS EDICTS (FATWA)

10

RELIGIOUS PROGRAMMING ON TELEVISION IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PLACE YOUNG ARABS ARE GETTING GUIDANCE AND DIRECTION FROM

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YOUNG ARABS WANT FRIDAY SERMONS TO BE OF A MORE REASONABLE DURATION: NOT TOO LONG, AND NOT TOO SHORT

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THE LOCAL IMAM, FOLLOWED BY THE LOCAL FATWA CENTRE AND RELIGIOUS TV SHOW PHONE-IN'S, IS WHERE MOST YOUNG ARABS WILL GO TO HAVE THEIR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

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TERRORISM AND EXTREMISM IN THE NAME OF RELIGION IS THE PRIMARY CAUSE FOR RELIGIOUS SCEPTICISM AMONG THE YOUTH

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WHILE THE VAST MAJORITY OF YOUNG ARABS REJECT EXTREMIST GROUPS LIKE ISIS AND AL-QAEDA, A QUARTER HAVE AN AMBIVALENT ATTITUDE TOWARDS THEM

RESULTS

IDENTITY

1. When you think of who you are, what is your principal source of identity?

	Libya	Tunisia	Algeria	Mauritania	Sudan	Iraq	Lebanon	Oman	Yemen	Qatar
My country	50	60	56	39	54	50	50	57	45	59
Being Arab	13	16	12	13	14	12	28	10	16	18
My religion	9	13	11	12	15	17	18	23	13	19
My family or tribe	28	11	21	37	17	22	3	10	26	4

Percentages may not add up to 100% because of rounding.

At least a plurality of surveyed millennials in 10 countries say “my country” is the main source of their identity. This view is strongest in Tunisia, Qatar, Oman, and Algeria.

Family and tribe is a significant source of identity in Mauritania and Libya. In Yemen and Iraq this view is strongest among Sunni youth.

“Being Arab” is strongest among Lebanese youth while “Religion” is most prevalent as a source of identity among Omanis.

2. How important is it to you that those you meet know that you are a Muslim?

	Libya	Tunisia	Algeria	Mauritania	Sudan	Iraq	Lebanon	Oman	Yemen	Qatar
Important	72	71	67	78	74	71	66	81	65	88
Not important	28	30	32	22	25	29	34	19	34	12

Percentages may not add up to 100% because of rounding. Important is the aggregation of the responses “Very important” and “Somewhat important”. Not important is the aggregation of the responses “Somewhat not important” and “Not at all important”.

Majorities in all 10 countries say it is important that those they meet know that they are Muslim. In fact, majorities in Mauritania, Libya, Oman, Algeria, Sudan, Tunisia, and Yemen say this is “very important.” The least importance is assigned by Lebanese millennials.

In the countries in which “My religion” was less prevalent as a choice in question one, young Arabs still strongly considered it important that they be known by their faith. Rather than suggest a contradiction or confusion of identities, it offers an insight into how Arab millennials understand the place of religion in their lives and the concept of identity in general.

3. Do you have friends or acquaintances who are not Muslim?

	Libya	Tunisia	Algeria	Mauritania	Sudan	Iraq	Lebanon	Oman	Yemen	Qatar
Yes	47	39	44	34	23	44	95	49	39	84
No	53	61	56	66	77	56	5	51	61	16

Almost all the millennials in Lebanon (95%), as well as 84% in Qatar, say they have non-Muslim friends and acquaintances.

However, majorities of millennials in the five North African countries surveyed (Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Mauritania, and Sudan), as well in Iraq and Yemen, report that they do not have friends or acquaintances who are not Muslim. Even with these majorities, between 20-40% still know a non-Muslim, demonstrating that this is a group with some interaction with others.

Millennials in Oman are split on this question, with 49% saying they do have non-Muslim friends and 51% saying they do not.

RELIGIOUS UNDERSTANDING AND DEVOTION

4. Which of the following reflects your view?

	Libya	Tunisia	Algeria	Mauritania	Sudan	Iraq	Lebanon	Oman	Yemen	Qatar
A. Non-Muslim citizens in a Muslim country should be treated as full citizens with the same rights as Muslim citizens.	46	58	71	53	68	57	78	59	63	89
B. Non-Muslim citizens in a Muslim country should not be treated as full citizens with the same rights as Muslim citizens.	54	42	29	47	32	43	22	41	37	11

At least half of all millennial respondents everywhere but Libya believe that “non-Muslim citizens living in a Muslim country should be treated as full citizens with the same rights as Muslim citizens.” This view is strongest in Qatar (89%), Lebanon (78%), Algeria (71%), and Sudan (68%).

Libya is the only country in which a slight majority chose option B. Approximately, 40% of youth in five countries, Tunisia, Mauritania, Iraq, Oman, and Yemen, said the same. However, the vast majority of them also said they did not have any friends or acquaintances who were non-Muslim.

In any case, the findings raise concerns about a dire lack of understanding among young Arabs

on the provision of rights for all citizens and Islamic views on citizenship. The view that citizenship is subject to a hierarchy of prominence determined primarily by one's faith is precisely the frame that extremist groups want normalised.

5. Which of the following statements, A or B, best reflects your point of view?

	Libya	Tunisia	Algeria	Mauritania	Sudan	Iraq	Lebanon	Oman	Yemen	Qatar
A. I feel tension between the temptations and vices faced by my generation in today's society and preserving my identity and practice as a Muslim.	37	36	33	38	38	27	49	26	33	45
B. Even with the temptations and vices that are prevalent in today's society, I find it easy to observe my identity and practice as a Muslim.	63	64	67	62	62	73	51	74	67	55

Majorities in all countries find it easy to observe their identity and practice as a Muslim despite the temptations and vices that are prevalent in today's society. Surprisingly, Lebanese youth are split on this question (49% face tension) despite the country's cosmopolitan reputation.

6. From the list provided below which aspect of Islam is most important to you?

	Libya	Tunisia	Algeria	Mauritania	Sudan	Iraq	Lebanon	Oman	Yemen	Qatar
Seeking Islamic knowledge	17	17	13	13	11	9	10	14	10	19
The political issues facing Muslims	11	11	11	11	12	11	30	17	11	19
Living by Islamic ethics and morals	38	41	40	38	36	45	19	40	36	11
Spirituality	13	11	13	13	15	9	12	10	10	13
Performing religious obligations and avoiding prohibitions	11	9	11	15	12	11	19	8	13	21
The sense of identity that Islam provides	11	10	12	10	13	15	10	11	21	17

Percentages may not add up to 100% because of rounding.

In general, Arab youth in the ten countries in this survey cite “Living by Islamic ethics and morals” as the most important aspect of Islam for them.

“Seeking Islamic knowledge” was the second most popular aspect of Islam in Libya, Tunisia, Qatar and Algeria (where it is joint second with “political issues” and “spirituality”, respectively). Tunisia may be unsurprising as it is a country steeped in an Islamic scholarly tradition and the home of the prestigious Zaitouna Seminary, which still holds an important place in the country’s religious culture.

In the three countries experiencing conflict— Libya, Iraq and Yemen, “Political issues facing Muslims” had less importance, whereas it had the most importance among Lebanese youth and secondary importance among Qatari youth. One possible explanation for this could be the prevalence of politicised religious discourse in Qatar and the proximity of Lebanon to key conflict areas like Palestine and Syria. Interestingly, the majority of Lebanese youth who have chosen this aspect also expressed their concern that the Friday sermon was “over-politicised”.

RELIGION IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE

7. Which of the following statements, A or B, best reflects your point of view?

	Libya	Tunisia	Algeria	Mauritania	Sudan	Iraq	Lebanon	Oman	Yemen	Qatar
A. If cultural content breaches the moral and ethical values of society, it should be banned.	81	80	79	85	77	75	54	75	72	67
B. Cultural content should not be regulated by moral sensitivities. If don't like it, they don't have to watch it.	19	20	21	15	23	25	46	25	28	33

Among all surveyed groups, majorities of millennials agree that cultural content should be banned if it breaches the moral and ethical values of society. Three-quarters or more of respondents in Mauritania, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Sudan, Oman, and Iraq hold this view.

Youth in Tunisia, one of the most secular nations in the Arab region, were more likely than youth in Yemen to support a ban on cultural content, further demonstrating the nuances that exist among this generation of Arabs.

Only in Lebanon, do more than four in 10 millennials believe that “cultural content should not be regulated by moral sensitivities” (46%).

8. How would you feel if someone approached you in a public space (school, workplace, mall, mosque, cafe, etc.) and imparted religious counsel to you?

	Libya	Tunisia	Algeria	Mauritania	Sudan	Iraq	Lebanon	Oman	Yemen	Qatar
A. I would strongly reject it because no one has the right to give religious advice to others in a public space	28	22	34	21	38	26	33	17	40	12
B. I would willingly accept it	42	62	34	38	37	41	30	48	29	49
C. I would accept it if it was done discreetly and with courtesy	29	16	32	41	25	32	37	35	31	39

Percentages may not add up to 100% because of rounding.

At least six in 10 millennial respondents in all countries agree that they would accept religious advice (nasiha) given to them in a public space. Youth in Yemen are more likely to reject public religious counsel than their counterparts in Lebanon and Tunisia.

The majority of millennials in Tunisia (62%) would willingly accept religious advice regardless; opinion also falls in this direction among Qataris (49%) and Omanis (48%), followed by Libyans (42%), Iraqis (41%), and Sudanese (37%).

Substantial minorities in Qatar, Mauritania and Lebanon say they would only accept such advice if it was delivered “discreetly and with courtesy.”

On the other hand, more than one third of respondents in Yemen, Sudan, Algeria, and Lebanon “would strongly reject [religious counsel] because no one has the right to give religious counsel to others in a public space.”

9–12. On a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being “very involved” to 5 “not involved at all”), how involved do you think the state should be in each of the following areas?

Involved/Not involved	Libya	Tunisia	Algeria	Mauritania	Sudan	Iraq	Lebanon	Oman	Yemen	Qatar
9. The appointment of mosque Imams and arranging preparations for holy occasions	48/ 40	38/ 45	39/ 40	46/ 47	47/ 35	59/ 19	46/ 39	39/ 44	58/ 29	59/ 28
10. Involvement in defining religious discourse, whether in Friday sermons, public religious lectures/lessons and the like	43/ 47	40/ 47	38/ 45	33/ 59	47/ 42	63/ 22	43/ 44	42/ 47	61/ 26	38/ 52
11. Ensuring that religious discourse is not used to promote violence, incitement, and hatred	84/ 5	82/ 5	80/ 4	69/ 14	82/ 7	81/ 1	80/ 4	89/ 1	77/ 11	84/ 4
12. Anything related to religion in society	54/ 35	46/ 38	41/ 40	34/ 61	53/ 36	63/ 19	21/ 55	49/ 46	57/ 28	47/ 38

First number is “Involved” and second number is “Not involved.” Involved is the aggregation of responses of 1 and 2. Not involved is the aggregation of responses of 4 and 5. Percentages may not add up to 100% because of rounding and because responses of 3 are not included.

When asked about state involvement in the appointment of mosque Imams and arranging preparations for religious occasions, we find mixed responses:

- A majority of Iraqi, Yemeni, and Qatari youth support state involvement.
- Libyan, Sudanese, and Lebanese millennials lean slightly toward state involvement.
- Algerians and Mauritians are split in their opinion.
- Tunisians and Omanis lean against state involvement. The Tunisian case could be due to a negative history of state interference in mosque affairs over the last sixty years.

With respect to state involvement in defining religious discourse, including Friday sermons, public religious lectures, lessons and the like, we find:

- For state involvement: Iraqi, Yemeni, Sudanese youth
- Against state involvement: Mauritania, Qatar, Libyan, Tunisian, Algerian, and Omani youth.
- Split opinion: Lebanese millennials.

At least 69% of the youth agree on that the state should be involved in ensuring religious discourse is not used to promote violence, incitement and hatred. That number reaches more than 80% in eight countries.

Should the state be involved in anything concerning religion in society?

- For state involvement in anything religious-related: Libyan, Tunisian, Sudanese, Iraqi, and Yemeni youth.
- Against state involvement in anything religious-related: Mauritanian and Lebanese youth.
- Split opinion: Algerians, Omanis and Qataris.

Though Libyan and Tunisian youth were against state involvement in defining religious discourse, they supported the idea of the state being involved in anything religious-related in society. This suggests that they have particular notions about the state and its link to religion, or that they have not given the question thorough thought.

RELIGION AND CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE

13–15. To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements:

Agree/Disagree	Libya	Tunisia	Algeria	Mauritania	Sudan	Iraq	Lebanon	Oman	Yemen	Qatar
13. Religious discourse today clashes with the modern world in which we live, therefore it needs to be changed and reformed.	27/ 73	32/ 68	31/ 69	37/ 63	20/ 80	23/ 77	66/ 34	28/ 72	39/ 61	70/ 30
14. The language and manner in which religion is spoken about in lectures, lessons and sermons needs to be reformed.	37/ 63	32/ 68	33/ 67	53/ 47	38/ 62	29/ 71	72/ 28	31/ 69	30/ 70	68/ 32
15. The topics and issues which religious scholars and preachers address have to be renewed and made relevant to people today.	62/ 38	61/ 39	72/ 28	69/ 31	49/ 51	67/ 33	72/ 28	49/ 51	60/ 40	85/ 15

First number is "Agree" and second number is "Disagree." Agree is the aggregation of responses of "Strongly agree" and "Somewhat agree." Disagree is the aggregation of responses of "Somewhat disagree" and "Strongly disagree."

In Lebanon and Qatar a majority of respondents agree that religious discourse needs to be changed and reformed. Lebanese respondents who said this, as well as Qatari, also found their local Friday sermons to be "bland and boring" or "over-politicised". They also cite the best way to undertake religious reform as being "through an academic effort that involves religious institutions and scholars."

In all other countries, majorities disagree that religious discourses clashes with the modern world. In fact, more than half of millennial respondents in Libya, Sudan, Algeria, Oman, and Tunisia "strongly disagree." In Mauritania, a country known for its erudite Islamic scholarship, nearly 40% of youth agreed that religious discourse clashed with the modern world. We can gauge from their responses to the proceeding questions, namely reform being needed in the language used to communicate religion and the topics that are addressed by religious scholars, that the source of the clash seen by Mauritians could be situated here.

On reform required in the language and manner in which religion is spoken about in lectures, lessons and sermons:

- Agree: Lebanon, Qatar and Mauritania.
- Disagree: Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Sudan, Iraq, Oman and Yemen.

Majorities in almost every country agree that the topics and issues which religious scholars and preachers address need to be made relevant to people today. More than two-thirds of millennial respondents hold this view in Qatar, Algeria, Lebanon, Mauritania, and Iraq. Opinion is split in Sudan and Oman. The task for religious leadership would be to determine what those topics are.

16. If religious discourse is in need of reform in order to be relevant for the contemporary age, what is the best way to achieve this?

	Libya	Tunisia	Algeria	Mauritania	Sudan	Iraq	Lebanon	Oman	Yemen	Qatar
A. Through an academic effort that involves religious institutions and scholars	74	83	73	81	74	81	50	81	83	65
B. By discarding the legacy of Islamic scholarship and creating new religious understandings	16	8	13	13	6	5	31	7	4	28
C. By distancing religious discourse from public life	10	9	14	7	21	14	19	13	12	7

Percentages may not add up to 100% because of rounding.

The vast majority of millennials agree that religious reform should be undertaken through an academic effort led by religious institutions and scholars. More than two-thirds of respondents in Tunisia, Yemen, Mauritania, Iraq, Oman, Libya, Sudan, and Algeria hold this view.

Only Lebanese millennials differed in their views on this question: half of Lebanese respondents chose “academic effort”.

The other two options, “discarding the legacy of Islamic scholarship and creating new religious understandings” and “distancing religious discourse from public life,” are only selected by significant percentages of respondents in a couple of countries. Almost one-third of respondents in Lebanon and 28% in Qatar think the best way to achieve reform is by discarding current Islamic scholarship and creating new religious understandings. About two in 10 respondents in Sudan and Lebanon prefer distancing religious discourse from public life as the means of reform.

17. Which of the following statements, A or B, best reflects your point of view?

	Libya	Tunisia	Algeria	Mauritania	Sudan	Iraq	Lebanon	Oman	Yemen	Qatar
A. The understandings of religion that are prevalent in my society show respect for women and empower them.	66	70	72	68	75	71	67	74	79	79
B. The understandings of religion that are prevalent in my society restrict women and are used to reduce their role.	34	30	28	32	25	29	33	26	21	21

More than two-thirds of all survey respondents believe that “The understandings of religion that are prevalent in my society show respect for woman and empower them,” while between 25-33% of millennial respondents think these understandings “restrict women and are used to reduce their role.”

18. To what extent do you agree that:

Agree/Disagree	Libya	Tunisia	Algeria	Mauritania	Sudan	Iraq	Lebanon	Oman	Yemen	Qatar
We need more female religious scholars and preachers who are given the opportunity and space to preach in society more widely.	38/ 62	39/ 61	33/ 67	31/ 69	40/ 60	28/ 72	43/ 57	52/ 48	32/ 68	54/ 46

First number is “Agree” and second number is “Disagree.” Agree is the aggregation of responses of “Strongly agree” and “Somewhat agree.” Disagree is the aggregation of responses of “Somewhat disagree” and “Strongly disagree.”

In eight of the surveyed countries (Iraq, Mauritania, Yemen, Algeria, Libya, Tunisia, Sudan, and Lebanon), majorities disagree that their societies need more female religious scholars and preachers, while Qataris and Omanis lean toward agreement.

There is no common factor for why the majority of youth disagree with this statement. Rather, local factors and considerations will explain the choices made. In Lebanon, for example, youth in Beirut were as likely as their counterparts in more rural parts of the country, if not more, to disagree. There were also no major differences in viewpoint across genders.

19–20. To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements:

Agree/Disagree	Libya	Tunisia	Algeria	Mauritania	Sudan	Iraq	Lebanon	Oman	Yemen	Qatar
19. Religion has been a major cause for the Arab world’s decline in the social, political and economic realms in recent times.	21/ 79	25/ 75	24/ 76	18/ 82	12/ 88	16/ 84	35/ 65	12/ 88	18/ 82	20/ 80
20. Religion has an important role to play in my country’s future.	81/ 19	74/ 26	80/ 20	85/ 15	78/ 22	65/ 35	44/ 56	81/ 19	74/ 26	71/ 29

First number is “Agree” and second number is “Disagree.” Agree is the aggregation of responses of “Strongly agree” and “Somewhat agree.” Disagree is the aggregation of responses of “Somewhat disagree” and “Strongly disagree.”

The majority of Arab millennials in all countries disagree that religion has been a major cause of decline for the Arab world. In most countries they disagreed by very large margins.

More than two-thirds of respondents in all surveyed groups, except the Lebanese, believe that “religion has an important role to play in my country’s future.” In fact:

- Majorities who say they “strongly agree” with this statement: Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Mauritania, Yemen, Oman, Iraq and Sudan

- The majority in Qatar somewhat agree.
- The majority in Lebanon disagree that religion has an important role to play in their country's future.

21. In your opinion, which one of the following options do you see as being the most important?

	Libya	Tunisia	Algeria	Mauritania	Sudan	Iraq	Lebanon	Oman	Yemen	Qatar
A. Foster Islamic values and ethics in the behavior, words and deeds of Muslim societies	30	35	38	41	34	38	20	31	35	26
B. Promote the development, growth and prosperity of society and the nation as a religious duty	29	26	29	30	32	25	20	17	25	28
C. Make religion the basis of laws and government	24	21	19	18	19	21	12	28	20	16
D. Conceive a religious identity that is authentically rooted in Islam but also comfortable with the contemporary world.	15	14	12	11	11	12	26	19	14	28
E. Limit religion to mosques and homes with no role or effect in social and public life	3	4	2	0	4	4	22	6	5	2

Percentages may not add up to 100% because of rounding.

In most countries, “fostering Islamic values” and “promoting the development of society and the nation as a religious duty” are the most important duties for young Arab Muslims. Their choices serve as an indicator of their wish to place ethics and morals at the centre of their communities and see their countries prosper. Discourses on stewardship of the earth and human development are natural to religion and can be a powerful force in promoting these choices.

The third most important option in most of the surveyed countries is to “make religion the basis of laws and government.” This choice has the most support in Oman, but also garners significant support in Libya, Tunisia, Iraq, and Yemen.

The main outlier country is Lebanon, where the conception of a contemporary religious identity is most important to them. Qataris agreed, though it was seen as important as “promotion of the development of the nation”. As Lebanon is also the cosmopolitan of all the surveyed countries it is likely that the youth feel the need more readily than their counterparts elsewhere. Interestingly, the plurality of Lebanese youth who chose this option also agreed that religious discourse clashes with the modern world. More Lebanese females than males chose this option.

RELIGIOUS SCHOLARSHIP, LEARNING AND KNOWLEDGE

22. Of the following, who do you think has the right to issue religious edicts (fatwa) and determine the permissible and prohibited (halal wal-haram)? (Select two)

	Libya	Tunisia	Algeria	Mauritania	Sudan	Iraq	Lebanon	Oman	Yemen	Qatar
The Grand Mufti of my country	55	59	54	58	53	53	40	54	68	56
Ulama and Shaykhs	46	50	43	47	44	45	37	42	58	35
The imam in my local mosque	39	34	34	36	34	37	37	41	29	35
Muslim professors of Islamic Studies in university	36	37	47	42	42	35	19	39	34	10
Preachers who have television shows	16	14	17	16	19	15	44	14	1	48
Any devout and observant Muslim	6	6	5	1	7	8	10	5	6	9
Any educated Muslim	2	0	0	0	1	7	14	6	3	7

The most notable finding in this question was the authority that Arab Muslim millennials afforded to the local imam. Though he wasn't the first choice in any country, significant numbers in most countries still recognised him as someone who possesses the religious authority to issue edicts (fatwa)—despite this not being the case, since most mosque imams are not trained for or authorised at that level. It underlies the importance of the local imam in the lives of younger Arabs.

Majorities in all countries, except in Lebanon, recognised the role of traditional religious authority, with the Grand Mufti and Ulama and Shaykhs being primarily seen as having the right to issue religious edicts. Yemeni, Tunisian and Mauritanian youth were most likely to cite the Grand Mufti.

More than four in 10 respondents in Algeria, Mauritania, and Sudan say Islamic Studies professors have the right to issue edicts, as do at least one-third of respondents in Libya, Tunisia, Iraq, Oman and Yemen. It is worth noting that just 10% of Qatari millennials believe Islamic Studies professors can issue religious edicts and determine permissible and prohibited matters.

Almost one-half of Qatari and 44% of Lebanese respondents believe that television preachers possess this right, despite television not being a traditional medium by which to assess or determine their religious and scholarly aptitude. The high numbers in Qatar may be due to the prevalence and popularity of fatwa-based television shows.

About 10% of Lebanese and Qatari youth cite any devout, observant or educated Muslim as having the right to issue a religious edict. Though the number is small, it is concerning as it exhibits a lack of understanding of what qualifications, skills and knowledge are required to gain authorisation as a mufti scholar.

23. Which of the following is most important to you for providing guidance and direction in your general life affairs?

	Libya	Tunisia	Algeria	Mauritania	Sudan	Iraq	Lebanon	Oman	Yemen	Qatar
Friday sermon	29	31	26	29	30	23	33	30	30	12
Religious lectures/talks in my town	26	22	39	35	28	8	12	15	11	14
Religious TV shows	31	35	25	27	25	37	24	36	37	46
Social media networks/accounts of famous religious personalities	15	13	10	9	17	32	32	19	22	28

Percentages may not add up to 100% because of rounding.

Overall, the top choice for where Arab millennials are going for guidance and direction is religious TV shows. This is the number one choice in six countries: Qatar, Yemen, Iraq, Tunisia, Oman, and Libya. A number of considerations come forth from this finding, not least the alarm that religious institutions and leadership should feel. Television is an unregulated space where qualification and competence are not a prerequisite when talking about religion and issuing edicts and opinions.

Friday sermons are considered the most important source by Lebanese and Sudanese respondents. Sermons are the second most selected option in Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Mauritania, Oman, and Yemen.

Local religious lectures or talks are significant sources of guidance and direction only among respondents in North African countries and are the most important in Algeria and Mauritania.

Finally, "Social media networks or accounts of famous religious personalities" is identified as the second-most important source of guidance in Iraq, Lebanon, and Qatar, while a fifth of youth in Yemen feel the same, demonstrating the role and importance of social media networks among this generation.

24. Which of the following best describes the Friday sermon in your local mosque?

	Libya	Tunisia	Algeria	Mauritania	Sudan	Iraq	Lebanon	Oman	Yemen	Qatar
A. Bland and boring	10	12	21	15	15	6	33	11	13	25
B. Over-politicized	15	14	21	27	18	18	37	15	18	8
C. The government's voice	29	28	21	22	22	21	5	17	24	8
D. Relevant to my life	21	25	19	22	18	26	13	28	20	36
E. Inspiring	24	21	17	14	26	29	12	30	23	22
F. None of the above	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1

Percentages may not add up to 100% because of rounding.

Millennial respondents were asked to describe the Friday sermon at their local mosques. Majorities in Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Mauritania, Sudan and Lebanon had negative views (either “bland and boring”, “over-politicised” or “the government’s voice”) of the sermon. Iraqis, Omanis, and Qataris leaned towards a positive view (“relevant to my life” or “inspiring”).

Over-politicisation of the sermon was significant in Mauritania and Lebanon. About a fifth of respondents in Algeria, Sudan, Iraq, and Yemen held this view.

The general view of the Friday sermon being negative poses a challenge and an opportunity for Islamic affairs departments in these countries to improve the sermon as an important and relevant source of religious guidance for younger generations.

25. Of the following suggestions which one would you like to see most in your local Friday sermon?

	Libya	Tunisia	Algeria	Mauritania	Sudan	Iraq	Lebanon	Oman	Yemen	Qatar
A. Topics which are important to people’s lives	32	26	36	35	33	26	21	24	26	38
B. A sermon of more reasonable duration; not too long, not too short	44	46	45	41	43	48	37	47	47	34
C. An Imam who is better accomplished in his delivery of the sermon	24	29	19	24	24	26	42	29	27	27

Percentages may not add up to 100% because of rounding.

On suggestions for improving the Friday sermon, most youth want a more reasonably-timed sermon. This was the option most chosen in Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Mauritania, Sudan, Iraq, Oman and Yemen. Outliers were in Lebanon and Qatar, where respondent’s wished to see a more accomplished imam and more relevant topics in the Friday sermon.

In general, all three options were recognised. The least recognised option was having a more accomplished imam in Algeria (19%).

26. Some Muslims have very few questions about their faith and religion, while others have a lot. Which best describes you?

	Libya	Tunisia	Algeria	Mauritania	Sudan	Iraq	Lebanon	Oman	Yemen	Qatar
A. A. I have questions about core beliefs and understandings of religion.	20	24	24	16	16	8	26	23	10	36
B. B. I have some questions about general religious issues.	58	51	51	66	60	39	43	49	49	61
C. C. I do not have many questions about my faith and religion.	22	24	26	18	25	52	31	29	41	4

Percentages may not add up to 100% because of rounding.

Respondents were asked if they have questions about core beliefs or about general religious issues, or if they do not have many questions about faith and religion.

About one-quarter of respondents in Tunisia, Algeria, Lebanon, and Oman say they have questions about core beliefs and understandings of religion. The percentages are even higher in Qatar (36%).

At least a plurality in Libya, Mauritania, Sudan and Qatar say they have general questions about religion, as did half of Tunisians, Algerians, Omanis and Yemenis.

Iraqis had the least questions about their faith and religion.

27. If and when you have questions about your faith, how important is it that you get your questions answered?

	Libya	Tunisia	Algeria	Mauritania	Sudan	Iraq	Lebanon	Oman	Yemen	Qatar
Very important	53	55	57	64	51	49	35	67	66	41
Somewhat important	39	34	29	28	34	14	25	20	24	55
Somewhat unimportant	5	6	9	6	9	25	27	10	4	2
Not at all important	3	5	6	2	6	11	13	4	6	1

Percentages may not add up to 100% because of rounding.

For at least 85% of respondents in the North African countries surveyed (Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Mauritania, and Sudan), and in Oman, Yemen, and Qatar, it is important for them to get answers to questions they have about their faith.

At least six in 10 respondents in Iraq and Lebanon also consider this important. However, more than one-third among them also say it is not important for them to get answers to their questions about their faith.

The general results show that Arab youth want their religious questions answered. With the exception of Qatar, Lebanon, and Iraq, youth in all the other countries deem it “very important”. The key consideration resulting from this finding is: where do they go for their answers?

28. Of the list below, where would you go when you have questions about religious matters and faith? (Select two)

	Libya	Tunisia	Algeria	Mauritania	Sudan	Iraq	Lebanon	Oman	Yemen	Qatar
An observant/devoted family member, friend or someone I know	25	34	32	27	32	44	42	21	38	21
Internet	26	21	21	28	25	44	43	32	26	60
Local mosque Imam	53	62	62	45	48	30	49	50	26	18
The official Fatwa center for my country	52	52	51	51	42	22	25	36	24	39
Official Fatwa center of another country	7	4	4	8	10	4	1	5	9	6
Religious TV show phone-in	50	38	41	36	39	29	56	38	24	41
Islamic books	12	20	14	24	13	8	10	16	23	20

Underscoring yet again the importance of the local imam's role, he is cited as the most popular source for seeking answers to questions. Whilst this result shows that local imam's are accessible, it also raises important questions about the ability of a local imam to answer complex questions that exist beyond the general issues of religion, devotion and worship. The connected nature of this generation's life and the unprecedented access it has to information is certain to raise difficult questions, and often ones that local imams are not trained for answering.

Religious television shows are more popular as a source of seeking answers to religious questions in four of the surveyed countries (Iraq, Lebanon, Oman, and Qatar) than the local Fatwa centre.

The Internet is a top choice among Qataris and Iraqis, and the third most significant place for Lebanese millennials.

An observant family member or friend is a top choice in Iraq, Yemen, and Lebanon.

Islamic books and the official Fatwa center of another country are less common places for respondents to turn with religious questions.

29. Do you think that scepticism about religion has increased among your generation?

	Libya	Tunisia	Algeria	Mauritania	Sudan	Iraq	Lebanon	Oman	Yemen	Qatar
Yes	32	39	35	36	53	57	60	54	60	16
No	68	61	65	64	47	43	40	46	40	84

Overall, respondents are split on this question. In five countries, Sudan, Iraq, Lebanon, Oman, and Yemen, majorities (53-60%) think that scepticism about religion has increased among their peers. On the other hand, more than six in 10 millennial respondents say they do not think scepticism has increased in their generation, with the strongest views in Qatar and Libya, followed by Algeria, Mauritania, and Tunisia.

30. Which of the options listed below, in your opinion, best describe the cause for scepticism about religion among youth? [Select two.]

	Libya	Tunisia	Algeria	Mauritania	Sudan	Iraq	Lebanon	Oman	Yemen	Qatar
Religious discourse that is unreasonable and illogical	30	22	21	16	19	13	29	12	17	26
Not finding convincing answers to questions on religion	21	24	17	20	18	18	37	20	19	19
Civilizational regression in Muslim countries	30	28	34	33	34	35	31	34	30	49
Terrorism and extremism in the name of religion	49	55	54	59	61	64	37	57	62	55
Personal problems	19	21	22	23	20	17	22	24	19	26
Unethical behavior of religious representatives	51	50	53	49	49	52	43	55	53	24

The Arab millennials surveyed identify terrorism and extremism in the name of religion as the main cause for religious scepticism among youth. It ranked as the primary cause in Tunisia, Algeria, Mauritania, Sudan, Iraq, Yemen, and Qatar.

The second most common cause identified by respondents is unethical behaviour of religious representatives. When religious leaders and voices fail to live up to values, ethics and morals, it will have a negative effect on how religion is perceived. This is a generation that differs to its parents and grandparents in this regard. Earlier generations may have overlooked breaches in decent behaviour by religious representatives. This generation, however, will closely associate the behaviour of religious leadership with the religion itself.

Civilisational regression was identified as the third most common cause for religious scepticism in most countries. The development state and condition of a nation has an impact on the way religion is viewed among Arab millennials. There is a historical precedence for this in the 19th and 20th century 'decline discourse', when subsequent generations of Arab thinkers struggled with the task of diagnosing the cause of civilisational decline in the Arab and Muslim world. Early thinkers often associated decline with religion and sought to either reform it or marginalise it, much in the same spirit of Enlightenment-era Europe, but, often missing the particular social, cultural and historical realities that differentiated the two contexts.

Notably, all of the Arab millennials who identified civilisational regression as a cause for religious scepticism did not agree, and in most cases strongly disagree, that religion has been a cause for the Arab world's decline.

EXTREMISM

31. Which of the following options reflects your view on movements and groups like Islamic State (ISIS), Al-Qaeda, Ansar Bayt al-Majdis, and other similar groups?

	Libya	Tunisia	Algeria	Mauritania	Sudan	Iraq	Lebanon	Oman	Yemen	Qatar
A. They are misguided and tarnish the image of Islam.	76	72	67	73	76	81	60	61	75	77
B. Some of what they believe, say and do is correct while some of it is wrong.	13	11	16	12	10	10	26	17	12	13
C. Their beliefs and ideas are correct but their actions are wrong.	9	11	12	8	11	9	14	20	9	9
D. They are correct and follow a rightly-guided religious path.	3	5	5	6	3	1	0	3	4	1

Percentages may not add up to 100% because of rounding.

Majorities in every country—at least six in 10 millennial respondents—agree that extremist groups like ISIS and Al-Qaeda are misguided and tarnish the image of Islam. The strongest opinions are in Iraq, Qatar, Sudan, Libya, and Yemen, followed by Mauritania, Tunisia, Algeria, Oman, and Lebanon.

Very few respondents in any country (at most 6%) say that such groups “are correct and follow a rightly-guided path.”

In Lebanon, four in 10, have ambivalent views on extremist groups while in Oman it is 37% (“Some of what they believe, say and do is correct, while some of it is wrong” or “Their beliefs and ideas are correct but their actions are wrong”). Though this does not necessarily mean an ideological conviction that these groups are correct, it does raise concerns. Young Arabs who believe that there can be some, partial correctness to these groups will be susceptible and vulnerable to their messaging and influence. This vulnerability is sure to be a greater test for the Muslim community in the long term than the continued physical presence of extremist groups in current conflict zones in Syria and Iraq.

32. In your opinion, of the factors listed below, which are the two most important reasons leading young men and women to join groups like Islamic State and Al-Qaeda?

	Libya	Tunisia	Algeria	Mauritania	Sudan	Iraq	Lebanon	Oman	Yemen	Qatar
State oppression	28	21	19	18	13	21	47	16	17	15
Foreign occupation of Muslim lands	9	19	14	20	14	12	11	20	11	11
Extreme religious discourse and teachings	41	44	45	50	44	48	21	45	46	69
A conviction that these groups represent truth	54	54	54	51	54	50	26	50	51	27
Poor levels of education	18	21	21	21	22	25	27	24	25	21
Poor economic conditions	23	18	20	18	22	23	31	23	24	14
Discrimination against Muslim minorities in foreign countries	16	12	15	10	18	12	25	11	14	28
Alienation of young people	11	10	12	11	15	9	12	10	12	15

When asked why young men and women are joining groups like ‘Islamic State’ and Al-Qaeda, the top reason cited in eight countries is “a conviction that these groups represent truth.” This reason is given by majorities in Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Sudan, Mauritania, Yemen, Oman, and Iraq.

The second most cited reason is “extreme religious discourse and teachings,” an explanation given by more than four in 10 millennial respondents in Qatar (69%, #1 choice), Mauritania, Iraq, Yemen, Algeria, Tunisia, Sudan, Oman, and Libya.

The next tier of reasons given for young men and women joining extremist groups includes: “poor levels of education,” “poor economic conditions” (with highest percentage in Lebanon: 31%), and “state oppression” (which is the top choice in Lebanon: 47%).

There is considerably less support for the final three options: “discrimination against Muslim minorities in foreign countries,” “foreign occupation of Muslim lands,” and “alienation of young people.”

DEMOGRAPHICS AND METHODOLOGY

DEMOGRAPHICS

	Libya	Tunisia	Algeria	Mauritania	Sudan	Iraq	Lebanon	Oman	Yemen	Qatar
15-24	51	48	46	57	62	58	52	57	59	58
25-33	49	52	54	43	38	42	48	43	41	42
Sunni	99	99	99	90	100	38	49	28	59	91
Shia	0	1	1	10	0	62	51	14	41	9
Ibadi	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	58	0	0
Male	53	50	52	49	52	51	51	50	51	50
Female	47	50	48	51	48	49	49	50	49	50
Illiterate	3	1	4	16	6	5	2	1	5	1
Secondary education or less	46	37	39	47	47	47	64	43	52	39
Post-secondary education	51	62	57	37	47	48	34	56	43	60
Live in city	74	67	69	61	44	65	89	79	44	96
Live outside city	26	33	31`	39	56	35	11	22	56	4

METHODOLOGY, SAMPLE AND GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE

Polls in the 10 countries were conducted using face to face, personal interviews. Urban as well as rural centres were covered in each country to cover a widespread geography. The sample obtained was nationally representative and comprised adult Muslim males and females, who were 15-33 years of age and citizens only. A multi-stage sampling (random, door-to-door) was utilised in most countries for the selection of respondents. However, where door-to-door sampling is not possible (Qatar and Oman), a referral sampling approach was used.

	MOE	Sample size	Dates of Survey	Geographic Coverage
Libya	±3.4	834	2/6-2/26/2017	Ajdabiya, Misrata, Tripoli, Azawya, Yefren, Nalut
Tunisia	±3.6	733	2/5-3/1/2017	Tunis, Bizerte, Ariane, Carthage, Sidi Thabet, Megrine, Sousse, Sfax, Kairouan, Gaafsa, Hergla, Belkhir, Ghraiba
Algeria	±3.2	937	2/5-3/2/2017	Algiers, Tiziouzou, Setif, Constantine, Oran, Chlef, Biskra, Ouargla, Annaba, El taref, Saida, Adrar
Mauritania	±4.7	439	2/6-2/24/2017	Nouakchott, Nouadhibou, Atar, Kiffa, Zouerat, Nema, Rosso
Sudan	±3.6	725	2/6-3/1/2017	Khartoum, Omdurman, Wad Madani, Khartoum Bahari, Al Abyad, Bur Sudan, Kusti, Nyala
Iraq	±3.4	848	2/5-3/1/2017	Baghdad, Diyala, Arbil, Tikrit, Kirkuk, Al Hilla, Karbala, Nassiriyah, Sulaimaniyah, As Samawah
Lebanon	±4.0	612	2/7-3/2/2017	Beirut, Baabda, El Maten, Tripoli, Akkar, Baalbek, Saayda
Oman	±4.3	530	2/5-2/26/2017	Muscat, Salalah, Nizwa, Sohar, Sur, Buraymi, Sib, Khasab
Yemen	±3.4	821	2/6-2/27/2017	Sanaa, Dhamar, Aden, Al Hodeidah, Bajel, Sadah, Al Mukalla, Ibb
Qatar	±5.0	383	2/5-2/24/2017	Doha, Rayyan, Wakrah, Dhakirah, Umm Salal Mohammad, Shahaniyah, Ghuwayriyah, Madinat Ash Shamal



TABAH
FUTURES
INITIATIVE