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Abdullahi An-Na`im

[November](#)[December](#)

"The Constitutional Incoherence of Islam as the Official Religion of the State"

[January](#)[February](#)

Thursday, May 12, 2011

[March](#)

Noon

[April](#)

Mershon Center for International Security Studies

1501 Neil Ave., Columbus, OH 43201

[May](#)*To see a streaming video of this event, [click here](#)*[Events Archive](#)

Abdullahi An-Na`im is Charles Howard Candler Professor of Law at Emory University. He holds an LLB (Honours) University of Khartoum, Sudan; 1970; LLB (Honours) and Diploma in Criminology, University of Cambridge, England, 1973; and PhD in Law, University of Edinburgh, Scotland, 1976.

He was lecture and associate professor of law at University of Khartoum, Sudan, 1976-1985, and visiting professor of law at UCLA 1985-87; Ariel F. Sallows Professor of Human Rights at the University of Saskatchewan, Canada, 1988-91; Olof Palme Visiting Professor at Uppsala University, Sweden, 1991-92. He served as executive director of Human Rights Watch/Africa 1993-95, and was appointed professor of law at Emory Law School in 1995, granted tenure in 1997, and appointed Charles Howard Candler Professor of Law in 1999.

An-Na`im is author of *Muslims and Global Justice* (2011); *Islam and Human Rights* (2010); *Islam and the Secular State: Negotiating the Future of Shari`a* (2008), translated into Indonesian and Arabic; *African Constitutionalism and the Role of Islam* (2006); and *Toward an Islamic Reformation: Civil liberties, human rights and international law* (1990), translated into Arabic, Indonesian, Russian and Farsi. His 10 edited books include *Human Rights under African Constitutions* (2003); *Islamic Family Law in a Changing World: A Global Resource Book* (2002); *Cultural Transformation and Human Rights in Africa*



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(2002); and *Human Rights in Cross-Cultural Perspectives: Quest for consensus* (1992). He has also published more than 60 articles and book chapters on human rights, constitutionalism, Islamic law and politics.

As a 2009 Carnegie Scholar, An-Na`im is currently working on a project entitled "Enhancing Citizenship: American Muslims and American Secularism," in which he is applying the thesis presented in his 2008 book, *Islam and the Secular State: Negotiating the Future of Shari`a*.

For this event, An-Na`im will discuss how almost all the constitutions of Muslim majority countries stipulate that Islam is the religion of the state. Many constitutions also stipulate that Shari`a is the source of legislation. In his lecture, An-Na`im will argue that such provisions are not only incoherent, as the state is incapable of having a religion or enforce Shari`a as such, but also inconsistent with the principle of constitutionalism itself. He will also highlight some of the problematic consequences of this confusion in the constitutional, political and legal experiences of Muslim majority countries.

This event is co-sponsored by [Honors and Scholars](#), [Department of Political Science](#), [Middle East Studies Center](#), [Mershon Center for International Security Studies](#), and [Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures](#).

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