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Cultural Identity with
an Emphasis on National
Cultural Identity

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This edition of the Journal has been edited by the NAMIJHRCD team.

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Foreword



In light of global human rights developments, the Non-Aligned Movement established the Centre for Human Rights and Cultural Diversity (NAMCHRC). Its mandates are derived from the outcome documents of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), especially the Tehran Declaration on Human Rights and Cultural Diversity, which was adopted in 2007. This initiative aimed to promote a human rights-focused, development-cantered, and culture-oriented approach based on peace, dialogue, cooperation and multilateralism.

The Non-Aligned Movement currently comprises 121 member countries and 18 observer States. These countries, united in their dedication to cooperation, peace, and dialogue, reject the double standards imposed by the mainstream discourse. Although the international community aims to uphold human rights both nationally and globally, we continue to see severe violations of these rights around the world. *A prominent example of this is the violence, crimes against humanity and genocide in the occupied Palestinian territories.*

NAM International Journal of Human Rights and Cultural Diversity aspires to provide an intellectual platform for NAM Member States, legal scholars, philosophers, academia, think tanks, and politicians to share their views and thoughts in order to contribute to enriching human rights discourse through various approaches, including cultural diversity. In this way, NAMCHRC seeks to introduce a more equitable and pluralistic discourse, rooted in the values of mutual respect, sovereignty, and cultural diversity.

A recent mandate assigned to the Centre is to publish *the NAM International journal on human rights and cultural diversity*. This journal will, among other purposes, act as a repository for the best practices of NAM member states in promoting human rights while protecting their cultural diversity.

In this context, thanks to the contributions and support of scholars and thinkers from member countries, the Centre has proudly published the inaugural issue of *the NAM International Journal of Human Rights and Cultural Diversity*. The launch of the journal marks a significant achievement for the movement and the Centre.



As the representative of the host country, a member of the Journal's Advisory Board, and the head of the *Ad Hoc Governing Council of the Centre*, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the scholars from member countries, as well as to the Director and the expert team at the Centre. Their invaluable ongoing support from scholars, intellectuals, engaged elites, and member countries is crucial for the Centre for Human Rights and Cultural Diversity to fulfil its responsibilities effectively .

The Centre's inaugural journal edition emphasizes the important theme of "*Cultural Identity, with Emphasis on National Cultural Identity*." This focus underscores its dedication and commitment to tackling common challenges faced by the international community, particularly in improving the national identity of members of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Taking advantage of this opportunity, we suggest the theme "*Artificial Intelligence, Human Rights, and Cultural Diversity*" for the next issue of the journal .We strive for greater realization of the noble principles of the Non-Alignment Movement and the United Nations Charter, with active involvement from all Member States.

Dr. Kazem Gharibabadi

Deputy Foreign Minister

For Legal and International Affairs

The Islamic Republic of Iran



Introduction



With the release of the inaugural issue of *The Non-Aligned Movement International Journal of Human Rights & Cultural Diversity*, we embark on a vital mission: to foster a global dialogue on preserving national cultural identity in an era marked by unprecedented challenges. This journal is a *peer-reviewed and open-access platform* that emerges from the mandates of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) outcome documents and the visionary work of the *NAM Centre for Human Rights and Cultural Diversity (NAMCHRCDC)* based in Tehran, Iran.

This journal serves as an essential platform for dialogue, scholarship and advocacy. Its establishment underscores NAM's steadfast dedication to multilateralism and the protection of cultural identity as enshrined in initial NAM documents like the Tehran Declaration on Human Rights and Cultural Diversity 2007.

This first issue, *Cultural Identity with an Emphasis on National Cultural Identity*, arrives at a pivotal moment. Globalization, technological upheavals, and monoculturalist pressures threaten to erode the rich tapestry of national identities that define our world. In this issue, we present eight pioneering articles by NAM scholars that address these challenges, celebrate resilience, and propose and reaffirm the principles that bring our diverse countries together.

The Non-Aligned Movement: A Legacy of Cultural Sovereignty

Established in 1961 amidst the ideological conflicts of the Cold War, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) has consistently advocated for nations' rights to self-determination while opposing aggression, occupation, and external domination. Today, its mission has evolved to include the preservation of cultural identity and sovereignty against the threats of neocolonial monoculturalism. The launch of this journal reflects the outcomes of NAM's summits, highlighting cultural identity as a fundamental aspect of human rights. By grounding our efforts in documents such as the Tehran Declaration, we honor NAM's core principle: *unity in diversity and cooperation over dominance*.

Cultural Identity in the 21st Century: Definitions and Dilemmas:
National cultural identity—the mosaic or the intricate tapestry of shared histories,



values of the majority, common symbols, norms, and practices that connect and unite communities—is the essence and soul of a nation.

National cultural identity amplifies this through tangible and intangible elements: language, flags, anthems, traditions, national boundaries and collective memory. However, as the contributors to this issue highlight, these elements face existential threats:

Globalization’s Dark Side: Unchecked globalization, driven by international capital and digital monopolies, commodifies culture, reducing heritage to marketable artefacts. The “dark sides of technology” enable cultural homogenization, where algorithms erase local narratives in favor of dominant paradigms.

Monoculturalism: Often masquerading as “progress,” monoculturalism dismisses pluralism, imposing uniform values that marginalize indigenous and national practices. This erodes social cohesion, leaving individuals alienated from both local roots and global currents.

Borderless Intrusions: Digital platforms and media transcend national boundaries, undermining cultural sanctities and reshaping identities. The outcome is an identity crisis and a fragmented sense of identity, where youth and vulnerable individuals struggle with a fragmented sense of self in a world filled with a barrage of conflicting messages.

These challenges demand urgent scrutiny. Can the Westphalian system of nation-states adapt to this new era, or are we witnessing the birth of a post-West order that redefines collective identity?

Threats to Cultural Identity: Insights from the Inaugural Issue

This issue's articles thoroughly examine the threats to cultural identity, presenting scholarly insights from NAM countries worldwide. Key themes include:

- The Erosion of Local Traditions: From disappearing dialects to endangered crafts, globalization’s profit-driven logic sidelines non-commercial cultural expressions.

- Family Roles: As the most important social pillar of society and the primary source of identity, the family unit is increasingly destabilized. Women, who frequently serve as cultural guardians, find themselves caught between tradition and modernity.



- Digital Colonialism: Social media's algorithmic dominance promotes Western-centric narratives, marginalizing non-Western ways of knowing or epistemologies.
- The Commodification of Culture: Market forces transform the core of cultures through consumer capitalism, influencing styles, preferences, tastes, desires, and language. One contributor warns of "cultural blending" that dilutes distinct identities, while another critiques the "Westernization" of education systems that sideline local histories. These analyses underscore a shared reality: cultural identity is not fixed; it requires active defense.

Strategies for Resilience: Insights from NAM Scholars

In response to current challenges, the authors of the journal suggest innovative approaches to reclaim cultural agency:

Revitalizing Education: Integrate national heritage into curricula to instil pride in youth. Highlight the role of women and family as educators and cultural transmitters.

Policy Safeguards: Advocate for laws protecting linguistic diversity, traditional knowledge, and cultural artefacts from exploitation.

Community-Led Initiatives: Empower grassroots movements to document oral histories, revive festivals, and foster intergenerational dialogue.

Digital Sovereignty: Develop locally governed digital platforms to amplify national voices and counter algorithmic bias.

Cross-National Solidarity: Leverage NAM's platform to share best practices, such as Iran's preservation of Persian heritage or multicultural federalism or preservation of cyberspace by national strategies.

These solutions dismiss isolationism and instead adopt a balanced approach that allows cultural pride to thrive alongside global engagement.

Conclusion

Towards an immaterial, non-egoistic and value-driven world Future: This inaugural issue is both a warning and a call to action. It reminds us that preserving cultural identity is the bedrock of human dignity—a request enshrined in NAM's outcome documents such as the Tehran Declaration on Human Rights



and Cultural Diversity. As monoculturalism's tide rises, our collective task is to ensure that no legitimate national identity is overlooked.

We extend profound gratitude to the NAM scholars whose insights illuminate these pages, and to the Islamic Republic of Iran, the host country, whose dedication to cultural preservation resonates with NAM's values and ideals.

May this journal serve as a guiding light, helping us achieve the ambitious goals of the Non-Aligned Movement. Together, in 121 NAM member states and 18 observer countries, we affirm: Our cultures and our national identities are our power and reaffirm our pledge to protect the tapestry of human cultures and national identities.

Dr. Mahmoud Khani Jooyabad

Director,

**Non-Aligned Movement Centre for Human Rights and Cultural
Diversity**