



BOLGAR
ISLAMIC ACADEMY

FINAL RESOLUTION

IV International Bolgar Forum “Theological Heritage of Muslims in Russia”

May 21, 2022

Bolgar Islamic Academy

Bolgar, Republic of Tatarstan, Russian Federation

On May 15–21, 2022, the IV International Bolgar Forum “Theological Heritage of Muslims in Russia” was held in Bolgar at the Muslim religious organization spiritual educational organization of higher education “Bolgar Islamic Academy”.

The forum was dedicated to the celebration of the 1100th anniversary of the official adoption of Islam by Volga Bulgaria and held with the assistance of the Fund for Support of Islamic Culture, Science and Education.

Forum mission was to unite the intellectual efforts of the domestic and foreign scientific, expert and confessional communities on working out solutions for the important issues of the development of the Russian Muslim Ummah.

The following events took place within the forum:

1. International scientific and practical conference “VI Bolgar Readings “Historical and cultural heritage of the Russian Muslims in the system of universal human values”.

2. International scientific and practical conference “V Shihabuddin Marjani Readings “The role and activities of fatwa institutions within the conditions of modern challenges and threats”.

3. International summit “Islamic education in the modern world: challenges, trends and possibilities”.

The forum events were held in a hybrid format (in-person and online). The working languages were Russian, Arabic, Tatar, and English.

Over 250 participants from more than 20 regions of Russia and 20 countries around the world delivered speeches at the forum venues.

Two cooperation agreements were signed; Bolgar Islamic Academy's new editions were presented; a portrait gallery of prominent Muslim scholars and religious figures from pre-revolutionary Russia was officially opened; distinguished scholars and diplomats participating in the forum delivered five lectures for the students and all attendees.

The International scientific and practical conference “VI Bolgar Readings “Historical and cultural heritage of the Russian Muslims in the system of universal human values”, held on May 16–17, 2022, aimed to study the spiritual and moral traditions of Russian Muslims in the context of the world Islamic heritage, as well as to provide platforms for expanding cooperation between representatives of the scientific community, traditional confessions, religious and public figures, and government agencies in the exchange of experience and the development of new approaches to the preservation and study of spiritual and moral values.

Focal points of the conference:

– Investigating theoretical and practical issues concerning the enhancement of mechanisms for studying, interpreting, and adapting the domestic Islamic theological heritage to modern conditions.

– Addressing the pressing issues concerning the search, study, and preservation of Islamic written heritage.

– Investigating the role and significance of Sufism in the formation and development of Russian Muslim peoples' history and culture.

– Studying the Muslim religious traditions and spiritual heritage of Turkic-Tatar scholars and religious figures.

– Analyzing the traditional views and new approaches to the preservation and study of the spiritual heritage in Russia Muslim scholars.

– Discussing the evolution of Islam and the role of Russian Muslims' spiritual and moral values in the formation of Russian statehood and society.

– Addressing the trends in Islamic theological thought: origins and modernity.

– Interaction between state structures and Muslim societies in preserving traditional values.

The conference included the following sessions:

Session 1: “Revival of the domestic Islamic theological heritage: issues of studying, interpretation and adaptation”.

Session 2: “Important issues regarding the search, study and preservation of the Islamic written heritage”.

Session 3: “The role and place of Sufism in the formation and development of the history and culture of the Turkic ethnic groups”.

Round table: “The contribution of Turkic-Tatar Muslim scholars and religious figures to the Islamic heritage”.

Educational and methodological publications developed and published by Bolgar Islamic Academy were presented during the conference, including original textbooks and practical aids on Islamic psychology, analytical and thematic tafsirs, Islamic lawmaking methodology, analytical and thematic hadith study.

A portrait gallery of prominent Muslim scholars and religious figures from pre-revolutionary Russia was officially opened as a part of the event.

The Muslim religious organization spiritual educational organization of higher education “Bolgar Islamic Academy” and the Institute of History, Language, and Literature of the Federal State Budgetary Scientific Institution of the Ufa Federal Research Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences signed a cooperation agreement during the conference's plenary session.

The conference was attended by more than 100 government officials, public figures, scholars, scientists from 13 countries around the world: Republic of Kazakhstan, Republic of Azerbaijan, Republic of Uzbekistan, Algeria, Kingdom of Morocco, Nigeria, Syrian Arab Republic, Republic of Iraq, Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Turkey, Indonesia, France, United States of America.

The Russian Federation was represented by scientists and scholars from Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kazan, Bolgar, Ufa, Agryz, Armavir, Astrakhan, Simferopol, Bakhchisaray, Grozny, Derbent, Makhachkala, Omsk, Tobolsk, Tyumen, etc.

The guests and participants of the event were representatives of federal and regional authorities, the Fund for the Support of Islamic Culture, Science and Education, rectors of higher religious educational institutions, heads of research institutions, religious and public figures, as well as prominent Russian and foreign scientists and experts, Islamic scholars, teachers and university students.

The conference participants emphasized during their speeches the contribution of Russian Islamic scholars and representatives of the Russian Ummah to countering political and religious challenges from Western countries.

The reports emphasized that the Muslim Ummah is an important part of Russia's multicultural people, and the works of Islamic scholars in Russia are an important part of the world Muslim heritage.

The participants of the session “The role and place of Sufism in the formation and development of the history and culture of the Turkic ethnic groups” emphasized the significance of Sufism in strengthening the modern Muslim Ummah and in opposing radical ideologies and movements. It was also stated that the ideas of humanism and enlightenment presented in the works of outstanding Sufis should be spread more widely among the Islamic Ummah and the general public.

As part of the work of the session “Important issues regarding the search, study and preservation of the Islamic written heritage”, the need for better methodological approaches to the study of manuscript sources, digital processing of archival materials, cataloging databases of ancient texts, and expanding open access for users was identified.

The study of the works of Turkic-Tatar Muslim scholars and religious figures has become a tradition for the Bolgar Readings. These issues were the topic of the round table “The contribution of Turkic-Tatar Muslim scholars and religious figures to the Islamic heritage”, which attracted the greatest attention from the participants.

The speakers once again put emphasis on the importance of preserving and disseminating the Islamic spiritual heritage of the Muslim peoples of Russia as a guarantee that Muslims, primarily Muslim youth, will realize their involvement in national values, the formation and strengthening of national-civil and confessional identity and personal involvement in the development of our state.

The conference participants drew attention to the consistent implementation of the recommendations and tasks put forward in the resolutions of previous conferences by Bolgar Islamic Academy.

In particular, the recommendations and decisions of the resolution of the forum, held in 2021 at the Academy, were taken into account and largely successfully implemented within the framework of scientific and educational activities:

1. In terms of research and dissemination of archival sources in scientific community:

– Expansion of the Academy’s electronic database of archival manuscripts and ancient printed sources in Arabic, Old Tatar (on Arabic script), English and other languages on Islamic topics continues through the study of online catalogs of libraries and archives in more than 40 countries of the world. The Academy's own electronic database currently has about 3,000 units.

– Islamic Heritage Center of the Academy continues to work on the description of early printed publications in European languages; more than 6,000 pages of old books and manuscripts have been digitized at the Laboratory for Restoration and Digitization; more than 50 books have been restored from the Academy's own collection; and work on their research and introduction into scientific community has been established as part of the implementation of master's and doctoral dissertations.

2. To popularize the study and dissemination of samples of domestic Muslim heritage by increasing Arabic language knowledge and improving language competencies:

– Additional professional program on the methodological foundations of teaching the Arabic language for teachers in Islamic educational institutions has been developed.

– Linguistic component of Bolgar Islamic Academy's educational and methodological process was strengthened: the full-time teaching staff was expanded by attracting a native speaker from the Syrian Arab Republic; work programs in the

Arabic language at a professional level for Bolgar Islamic Academy master's and doctoral students were updated.

– Implementation of an Arabic language teaching program for Bolgar Islamic Academy employees was started.

3. In terms of the profound study of scientific and theological research methodology by Bolgar Islamic Academy students, including the methodology of theological and textual analysis (tahkik):

– Theoretical and applied orientation program for master's and doctoral students is being implemented with the help of teaching staff from leading Russian and international universities.

4. Concerning the need to intensify research into Sufism in light of its role in strengthening Russian society and in the process of confronting radical ideologies and extremism:

– Weekly extracurricular readings of original sources from the global Islamic thought heritage have been implemented.

– In-person and online meetings with leading domestic and international experts in the field of Sufism research were arranged.

5. In terms of promoting the study of Islamic art as an important part of the ethno-confessional identity of Muslim peoples:

– The conference “Religion and art in the modern world” will be held in October 2022 by the Bolgar Islamic Academy in partnership with the State Hermitage Museum, it will include a discussion of Islamic art issues.

As a result, the recommendations and decisions of the 2021 forum's resolution were taken into account and largely successfully implemented as part of Bolgar Islamic Academy's annual plan for scientific and educational activities.

Based on the results of the conference, the materials presented in the reports, as well as taking into account the ideas voiced during the discussions, the participants underlined the need to:

1. Acknowledge the significant contribution of Bolgar Islamic Academy to the development of higher Islamic religious education in Russia.

2. Support efforts to develop the electronic student scientific journal “Bulletin of Bolgar Islamic Academy” as a leading platform for publishing and testing the results of scientific research of students and young scientists.

3. Intensify work on written sources that make up the domestic Muslim theological legacy through study, description, creation of catalogs and introduction into scientific circulation, including within the framework of master's and doctoral scientific and theological studies available in the book depository of Bolgar Islamic Academy and downloaded from electronic resources of the world's leading archives.

4. Expand and strengthen partnerships with domestic and foreign universities and research centers in order to study and disseminate the historical and cultural heritage of Russian Muslims as an integral part of the world heritage of Muslim culture.

5. Organize restoration courses for students of Bolgar Islamic Academy with the assistance of partners in order to expand competencies in the field of work on the preservation of manuscripts and printed sources.

6. Hold on at Bolgar Islamic Academy within the framework of the next International Bolgar Forum “Theological Heritage of Muslims in Russia” in 2023 the conference “VII International Bolgar Readings”, which is dictated by the great positive influence of the joint work of the conference participants in discussing and solving a wide range of topical issues and tasks stated in the conference program.

7. Strengthen the interaction between representatives of traditional confessions and the scientific community in the framework of the implementation of scientific and educational projects at Bolgar Islamic Academy.

8. Prepare and publish a collection of materials based on the results of the work of the international scientific and practical conference “VI Bolgar Readings “Historical and cultural heritage of the Russian Muslims in the system of universal human values”, and publish the electronic version on the website of Bolgar Islamic Academy.

9. Post this resolution on the website of Bolgar Islamic Academy for the benefit of members of the general public, Muslim and other scientific, educational, and religious organizations, and Russian federal and regional government officials.

International scientific and practical conference “V Shihabuddin Marjani Readings “The role and activities of fatwa institutions within the conditions of modern challenges and threats” was held on May 19, 2022.

The event was attended by more than 60 delegates from 12 Russian Federation regions: Republic of Tatarstan, Republic of Bashkortostan, Republic of Dagestan, Republic of Ingushetia, Republic of Crimea, Republic of North Ossetia-Alania, Chechen Republic, Kabardino-Balkarian Republic, Penza Oblast, Saratov Oblast, Moscow Oblast; from Russian cities: Moscow, Kazan, Ufa, Penza, Nizhnekamsk, Kurchaloy, Malgobek, Makhachkala, Nalchik, Nizhny Novgorod, Saratov, Simferopol, Sunzha; in addition to 14 countries: People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, Arab Republic of Egypt, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Kingdom of Morocco, Syrian Arab Republic, Republic of Turkey, Republic of India, Republic of Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Uzbekistan and Republic of Belarus.

The conference mission was to unite the intellectual efforts of the domestic and foreign scientific and theological expert community; exchange experience in the field of organizing fatwa-making activities; develop theological solutions for topical issues of concern to the Muslim Ummah of Russia in modern conditions in order to increase the role of Russian fatwa-making institutions in the face of increasing global challenges and threats.

Reports were delivered at the following two large sessions:

1. “Activities of domestic and foreign fatwa making institutions: problems and approaches to solve them”.

2. “Methodology of fatwa making: historical tradition and modern trends”.

Bolgar Islamic Academy presented, as part of the conference, new educational and methodological developments on the psychology of Islam, analytical and thematic tafsir, methodology of Islamic lawmaking, and analytical and thematic research of hadiths.

Leading experts and scholars in the field of fatwa-making touched upon a number of topical and important topics in their reports. Some of the reports were related to the disclosure of the experience of the work of fatwa-making institutions in Russia and abroad, including on the example of the post-Soviet countries (the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Kazakhstan), the Arab countries (People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, Arab Republic of Egypt, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Kingdom of Morocco), countries of Western and Eastern Asia (Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of India, Republic of Indonesia, Republic of Turkey).

Significant attention was paid to the analysis of the fatwas themselves, their structural and content features, as well as their application in the modern conditions of life of the Muslim communities of the countries participating in the conference.

The practical issues of fatwa-making related to the halal industry, medicine, Islamic finance, and ritual practice were of particular interest.

At the same time, constructive criticism was leveled at both the theoretical and practical levels of the process of preparing and issuing fatwas, while focusing on the lack of competence of specialists, hasty decisions and underestimation of the disastrous results of an erroneous fatwa.

It was emphasized that the regional ulema councils with their stable activities and positive experience of functioning for years under the country's major spiritual boards and muftiates have been playing a significant role in uniting and strengthening the Muslim community in Russia, as well as in other countries, consequently the entire public space. At the same time, it was noted that there are a number of complex issues that require collaborative efforts on a broader representative basis and at a higher professional level to be effectively addressed.

Participants at the conference drew attention to the fact that global challenges of our time increasingly clearly point to the need to unite the efforts of Russian fatwa-making institutions, as well as to expand their cooperation with foreign colleagues, in order to make a constructive contribution to solving social and other problems affecting the interests of all peoples and entire countries.

Taking into consideration the information presented in the reports as well as the ideas expressed during the discussion, the participants noted the following:

1. The importance of establishing an all-Russian Muslim theological advisory body, the Russian Ulema Council, comprised of authoritative Muslim scholars, including experts from the largest centralized spiritual boards and muftiates in Russia. Bolgar Islamic Academy could serve as a platform for such a body.

2. Recommend holding advanced fatwa-making training courses at Bolgar Islamic Academy for representatives of spiritual boards, members of ulema councils, and other interested parties.

3. Begin assembling a single open database of fatwas issued by Russian ulema councils as well as foreign fatwa organizations through collaborative efforts.

4. Noting the positive impact of the collaborative work of the conference participants, to hold IV Shihabuddin Marjani Readings at Bolgar Islamic Academy in 2023, devoting them to discussing the issues of training researchers and specialists with high competencies in fatwa-making.

International Summit “Islamic education in the modern world: challenges, trends and possibilities” was held on May 21, 2022.

The summit goals:

- Activation of interaction between the scientific expert and theological community in the development and promotion of relevant research in the field of Islamic sciences.

- Establishing scientific and pedagogical cooperation between Russian and foreign specialists in the field of Islamic religious education.

- Discussing and finding solutions for topical problems concerning the development of the system of Islamic religious education in the context of the preservation and dissemination of traditional Islamic spiritual and moral values in modern society.

The summit was attended by rectors of leading Russian Islamic universities, members of the Council for Islamic Education of Russia, heads and representatives of large international universities and scientific organizations from 10 countries around the world (Republic of Azerbaijan, Arab Republic of Egypt, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Maldives, United Arab Emirates, Republic of Kazakhstan, Republic of Uzbekistan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisian

Republic), members of the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, members of the Federation of the Universities of the Islamic World, representatives of the strategic vision group “Russia – Islamic World”, delegates of the World Muslim Communities Council, representatives of the Office of the President of the Republic of Tatarstan, federal media, as well as leading Russian and foreign scholars and experts in the field of higher university and Islamic religious education.

Participants at the summit agreed that a number of global trends in the development of modern higher education in general are determined by broad global trends and influenced by global social problems.

One of the leading trends is the democratization of education, which is manifested in the expansion of the rights of each person to education, opportunities for self-organization and the right of participants in the educational process to choose from a variety of educational systems and forms of education. The emergence of modern mass educational courses on open information platforms is one of the stable trends that made it possible to make educational content as accessible as possible for a wide range of users.

Simultaneously, summit participants noted that further democratization of education would be associated with ever-increasing opportunities for digitalization in this area.

Another current trend in higher education that meets the needs of employers looking for specialists who combine academic education with practical competencies is practice orientation and experience transfer. At the same time, it is critical to recognize that a dynamically changing professional environment necessitates continuous training and advanced training of specialists.

Individualization and self-determination of the student in the educational space is a significant trend in the development of higher education today, implying the student's independence in choosing their own educational trajectory, the independent formation of an individual curriculum, and the definition of a further professional trajectory. At the same time, the university's role is to provide such a choice and to support decision-making through consulting, tutoring, and personal coaching.

Models of personalized learning that assume the student's centrism and personal navigation in the educational space may imply both student choice of disciplines, forms of education, and language of instruction, as well as adaptability in the development of educational content based on students' individual educational results.

The introduction of tools for intelligent design of the student's educational path, which implies an individual list of disciplines and practices, the variability of

teaching methods and forms of organizing educational activities, educational content differentiated by level of complexity, will allow for the construction of an educational process based on the principles of variability.

The priority in connection with the new strategic guidelines is the transformation of the role of the teacher, which is transformed in connection with new functions (organizational, coordinating, accompanying, and consulting) into the role of a tutor, mentor, project master, etc.

Participants at the summit noted that the use of e-learning tools and distance learning technologies during the pandemic enabled them to identify the benefits of this format, such as the availability of 24-hour educational content, content visualization, independent assessment of educational results, etc. At the same time, not all types of academic goals can be achieved through e-learning. The traditional format of live communication between the teacher and the student remains the priority, as demonstrated by the "pandemic" period of restrictions. Simultaneously, blended learning models that combine traditional forms of learning and e-learning are actively developing.

Furthermore, contemporary university education focuses on the formation of meta-subject competencies and the development of critical thinking, which includes the redesign of educational programs and learning models, the systemic transformation of the educational process, and communicative pedagogy. Education based on communicative didactic principles focuses on the formation of a thinking culture rather than the content of the subject.

One of the significant trends in education in modern realities is the emergence of conditions that influence the quality of educational outcomes - psychological well-being and mental health. This approach entails developing educational content while taking into account each student's unique characteristics and abilities, as well as personal educational goals. It is accomplished by implementing the adaptability principle through the use of artificial intelligence tools, the dosage of educational information, and constant feedback.

The participants noted the importance of developing project-based learning skills focused on revealing the student's personality, developing their intellectual and creative abilities in the process of solving specific problems.

The aforementioned trends in higher education development are currently reflected in the activities of the world's leading universities, thereby determining the main guidelines for higher education development at the global level.

Participants at the summit paid special attention to the issue of filling the modern educational space with high-quality content, in which secular science and religious knowledge should complement each other organically. This approach is intended to provide additional conditions for improving the quality of general

theoretical and methodological training of religious leaders and scholars, experts; competitive advantages in professional activity in general for the successful socialization of graduates.

The speakers emphasized that the current circumstances imply the importance of a radical change in the value paradigms of society's development, specifically religious education in the spiritual and moral teaching of modern youth, including the formation of traditional values that are inherent in the Muslim peoples of Russia, and the true guidelines of citizenship, social duty.

Participants at the summit support the efforts of domestic Islamic academic institutions to create a single educational and scientific space, and believe that it is necessary to continue coordinated measures aimed at developing common approaches of Islamic educational organizations to the content and levels of Islamic religious education, academic mobility, education quality control, and achievement of common educational standards.

The speakers emphasized the importance of Islamic universities working in collaboration with leading federal scientific and educational institutions to spread cultural values, preserve and enrich them, while also taking into account the high principles of domestic Russian society and ensuring the country's spiritual security.

The participants believe it was vital and logical to hold the summit at Bolgar Islamic Academy – the highest level in the Islamic education system in the Russian Federation, the leading scientific and educational center that aims to consolidate the potential of the Russian Muslim clergy and higher Islamic educational organizations in the revival of the traditions of the unique Russian theological school, training highly qualified and competitive religious figures, theological scholars, who are designed to form the personnel elite of domestic Islam and the Muslim Ummah in Russia.

The speakers emphasized that the advancement of Islamic religious education in Russia is now one of the strategic directions of the state's domestic and foreign policy. There is a clear understanding that long-term interreligious and interfaith harmony in the country should be based on an accessible and high-quality system of religious education, particularly Islamic education, capable of carefully integrating national and religious traditions and included in a single all-Russian educational space.

Taking all of this into consideration, the participants of the International Summit “Islamic education in the modern world: challenges, trends and possibilities” issued the final declaration.

FINAL DECLARATION

1. Participants of the International Summit “Islamic education in the modern world: challenges, trends and possibilities” recognize that holding this summit is a vital and important scientific event aimed at finding effective solutions to modern challenges in the scientific and educational fields, as well as in the development of interreligious, interethnic, intercultural, and intercivilizational cooperation through education.

2. Summit participants note: the active and successful activities of Bolgar Islamic Academy in the implementation of educational and scientific projects predicated on broad cooperation with Russian and foreign partners contribute to raising the status of Bolgar Islamic Academy as a leading scientific, educational and spiritual center on a national scale and in the context of international higher educational development trajectories, therefore, strengthening the positive image of Russia in the international Islamic scientific and educational space, which in general makes a significant contribution to supporting the positive dynamics of interfaith relations in the country and on the world stage.

3. Summit participants emphasize that the activities of Bolgar Islamic Academy aimed at establishing and strengthening scientific and pedagogical cooperation through the involvement of leading Russian and foreign scientists, scholars, religious, public and political figures in the scientific and educational process forms a positive basis for discussing and finding solutions to urgent issues concerning the protection and preservation of spiritual and moral values in modern society, relying primarily on the consistently built domestic system of Islamic religious education.

4. Summit participants emphasize the importance of discussing and disseminating the positive experiences of leading Russian and foreign secular and Islamic higher education institutions in overcoming modern-day challenges, while taking into account key trends in modern higher education.

5. Summit participants emphasize the importance of focusing on such development trends in the system of higher education, including Islamic, as strengthening the importance of academic research and strengthening scientific potential, which together is designed to provide effective solutions to the problems of training professional personnel for innovative work; at the same time, it is critical to unite efforts in the training of highly qualified and competitive religious figures, scholars, who are designed to form the personnel elite of domestic Islam and the Muslim Ummah in Russia.

6. Summit participants emphasize the importance of preserving, studying, and developing traditional Islamic spiritual values in the context of resolving urgent problems of the Muslim Ummah.

7. Summit participants believe that it is necessary to post this resolution on Bolgar Islamic Academy's website for review by the general public in Russia and abroad.

Organizing committee,
May 21, 2022