



NYU center calls for improved U.S.-Muslim exchange

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by [Anna Sanders](#)

In a report published today, NYU's Center for Dialogues urged the Obama administration and Congress to change their policies regarding cultural exchange with the Islamic world. The report calls for the USA Patriot Act to be amended in order to make traveling easier for Muslims coming to the U.S.

The report was created following a conference the Center held in June called "Bridging the Divide Between the United States and the Muslim World Through Arts and Ideas: Possibilities and Limitations." The conference was part of a larger project called "Muslim Voices," in which the Center worked for two weeks to encourage people in New York and the rest of the world to view Islam through a cultural perspective.

"We organized the conference to reflect on art and culture as vehicles of outreach in a larger region of efforts to improve the Islamic relationship with the West," said Mustapha Tlili, the founder and director of the Center for Dialogues.

Tlili added that the conference brought about 50 participants together from the Western and Muslim regions to discuss the importance of Islamic culture. Those participating in the two-day conference made several recommendations to the Obama administration and other institutions, which included bringing about cultural exchange with the Muslim world as a means of reaching out, Tlili said.

Those who work at the Center believe it would be easier for Muslim artists to participate in cultural events in the U.S. if the Patriot Act was amended.

The report also recommended that the U.S. create an institution outside of the government that deals with cultural exchange in a way that considers the importance of culture while simultaneously enforcing security protocol.

Tlili said he hopes the report makes a significant difference in easing travel restrictions.

He said: "Hopefully, when we have released the report, they would be taken into account by those who are making policies and making political decisions."