



Rahbar International

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GU-Q Event Explores Basketball's Evolution in the Region at Launch of New Research Initiative

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Georgetown University Qatar's Center for International and Regional Studies (CIRS) unveiled its latest research venture, "America's Game in the Middle East: The 2027 Qatar Basketball World Cup," in a compelling panel discussion. Led by Professor Danyel Reiche, the initiative explores US political and cultural interactions in the Middle East through basketball's prism and its regional development. Scheduled to host the men's 2027 FIBA Basketball World Cup, Qatar anticipates engaging fans globally, marking a significant milestone as the first Arab nation to host the event. This underscores Qatar's persistent utilization of sports as a diplomatic tool, following its hosting of the FIFA World Cup 2022.

During the launch, Prof. Reiche emphasized the historic significance of Qatar's hosting and its broader implications. Subsequent discussions by Yaseen Ismail Musa, Claudia Kozman, and Joseph John delved into basketball's growth in the Middle East, America's role, and its impact transcending societal divisions.

Musa highlighted Qatar's national aspirations and the tournament's importance for the region, particularly its youth. Dr. Kozman underscored basketball's unifying power across political and ethnic boundaries, drawing on Lebanon's experience. John examined the game's evolution in major markets like China and India, addressing the NBA's influence and its challenges navigating political issues.

The CIRS initiative, extending beyond basketball's geopolitical dynamics, includes topics like women's basketball, Gulf migrant communities' involvement, and broadcasting rights. Through lectures and a dedicated vlog series, the project aims to foster scholarly discourse and public understanding.

This initiative marks CIRS's fourth major sports-focused research endeavor, following its recent exploration of Qatar's World Cup aspirations. The findings will soon be featured in a special issue of *The Journal of Arabian Studies*. For further details, visit <https://cirs.qatar.georgetown.edu/>.

