

Press release

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Contests / awards, Cooperation agreements
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South African colleague Abdulkader Tayob wins Humboldt Foundation's Georg Forster Award

Prof. Abdulkader Tayob (University of Cape Town) was recently awarded with a prestigious Georg Forster Research Award by the Alexander von Humboldt-Foundation. He had been nominated by Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient (ZMO) and will be cooperating with ZMO colleagues closely over the course of the next few years

ZMO has a long-ranging history of personal academic collaborations with Prof Abdulkader Tayob as his research interests have overlapped with several working groups and individual researchers. He was last present at ZMO in April, as a speaker at the conference "Claiming and Making Muslim Worlds". Currently, research interests are shared particularly with ZMO's vice director Prof. Kai Kresse and research unit leader Dr. Abdoulaye Sounaye, as ZMO is beginning work on its new research programme "Thinking through translocal entanglements: Perspectives from Asia, Africa, and the Middle East". Hereby, issues of conceptual decolonization and the overcoming of Eurocentrism in scholarship constitute a major field of shared interest, especially concerning the problematique of area studies and the (mis-)representation of Africa. Another shared theme of interest that may be worked through in collaboration is the focus on biographical trajectories of social actors, in Tayob's case with a view to religious teachers and educators. At ZMO, one research unit has been dedicated to the topic of "trajectories of lives and knowledge" over the past six years, led by Dr. Heike Liebau. Moreover, a newly constituted research unit on "Contested Religion" is keen to engage with Tayob's work.

"I received the news of the award with great joy and appreciation. It could not have come at a better time in my career. In fact, the award provides an opportunity to fine-tune established themes, and explore new directions with colleagues. The award also merits gratitude to and appreciation of colleagues in Germany and Africa. An award might be assigned to an individual, but it reflects shared projects, questions and concerns", says Tayob.

A longer-term partnership with Prof. Tayob at the University of Cape Town would seek to include possibilities and opportunities for researchers to visit each other's institutions and work on extensive collaborative projects. Mutual consultations and discussions of research practices will fundamentally benefit participants from both sides.

Prof. Abdulkader Tayob currently holds the chair in Islam, African Publics and Religious Values at the University of Cape Town, South Africa. Previously, he held one of four professorial-chairs (2002-2006) at the Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World (ISIM) in the Netherlands. Tayob's research has set standards for the contemporary study of Islam in South Africa and Africa more widely. Many graduate students and postdoctoral mentees, from diverse parts of Africa (and beyond) applied and extended his approach to the study of Muslim contexts in Africa and elsewhere. His work also has relevant general conceptual and methodological implications for Religious Studies more broadly. Tayob seeks to re-think opportunities and potentials that are not reliant upon the currently dominant Western schools of thought, but lets himself be creatively inspired, in order to forge and use new spaces for necessary re-conceptualizations of key terms and methods in research. Among his monographs are "Islamic Resurgence in South Africa" (University of Cape Town Press, 1995), "Islam in South Africa: Mosques, Imams, Sermons" (University of Florida Press, 1998) and "Religion in

modern Islamic discourse” (Columbia University Press and Hurst, 2009).

The Alexander von Humboldt-Foundation grants the Georg Forster Award in recognition of a researcher's entire achievements to date to academics of all disciplines whose fundamental discoveries, new theories, or insights have had a significant impact on their own discipline and beyond and who are expected to continue developing research-based solutions to the specific challenges facing transition and developing countries. The award amount totals €60,000. Award winners are invited to conduct a research project of their own in Germany in close collaboration with a specialist colleague.

The award ceremony will take place on 25 June 2020 in Berlin. Starting in October 2020, Abdulkader Tayob will work at Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient for a period of six months. Please send interview requests to lena.herzog@zmo.de

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URL for press release: <http://www.religion.uct.ac.za/religion/staff/academicstaff/abdulkadertayob>,
<https://www.humboldt-foundation.de/web/georg-forster-award.html>

URL for press release: https://www.zmo.de/fileadmin/Inhalte/Forschung/ResearchProgramme2020-24_01.pdf



Prof. Tayob at a conference at ZMO in April 2019