

**Formal ties between M'sia and Vatican welcomed**  
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The International Movement for a Just World (Just) warmly welcomes the establishment of formal diplomatic ties between Malaysia and the Vatican.

Malaysia now joins the majority of the world's nation-states that have forged diplomatic relations with the Vatican. This includes a large number of Muslim majority states.

Ties with the Vatican, it is hoped, will enhance relations between the Muslim majority and the Christian minority in Malaysia.

Muslims and Christians share many common values ranging from a belief in God and respect for the individual person to a strong commitment to the well-being of the weak and disadvantaged and a deep attachment to just and honest governance.

These shared values should be given greater emphasis within Muslim and Christian religious circles, in the education system and in the media in Malaysia.

Diplomatic relations between Malaysia and the Vatican should also spur both Muslims and Christians in Malaysia to combat extremist attitudes within the two communities and to overcome religious prejudices and biases.

Other hurdles pertaining to the misinterpretation and misapplication of certain laws should also be addressed with sincerity and honesty.

At the global level, Malaysia and the Vatican should not only fight violence and terrorism perpetrated in the name of religion but also cooperate with one another in trying to overcome the underlying causes of various global injustices which are mainly responsible for much of the current global turmoil.

Religious elites should not distort and pervert religious teachings to justify and legitimise any form of global injustice.

Dominance and control over global politics and the global economy has sometimes been rationalised through religion.

Malaysian Muslims, Christians and people of other faiths expect the Vatican to adopt a principled position against any such perversion and prostitution of religion.

It is our prayer that with the establishment of diplomatic relations, Malaysia and the Vatican will renew their quest for a just and peaceful world.

**Chandra Muzaffar is President of International Movement for a Just World (JUST).**