

## **PM: Use reason to counter Islamophobia, not hatred**

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**Bernamea**

Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim strongly advocates for reasoned discourse in accordance with Maqasid Syariah, and not enmity or hatred, when responding to Islamophobia to maintain order and peace.

In his keynote address at the International Forum on Islamophobia: Meaningful Engagement Through Madani Discourse in Putrajaya today, Anwar said reform of ideas is needed in both the West and the Muslim world to have a better understanding of each other.

“It is a contestation of ideas to see what is wrong with our society. Why are we talking about ideology and religion devoid of humanitarian concerns and compassion?”

“We in Malaysia take a very moderate position, understanding to work with everybody. I don’t think we need to go on harping on the past excesses and injustices of the West,” he said.

The prime minister also expressed hope that Malaysia could organise a conference in the future that involved experts that represent Islam and other religions that exist in Malaysia as well as the West to have a better understanding of the issue through a discourse.

Anwar said that while Islamophobia is very much real and more needs to be done to address the issue, the Muslim world also needs to overcome its prejudice and continuously engage with the West.

In Malaysia, Anwar said although the country does not face the issue of terrorist cells, thanks to the continuous hard work of the security forces, it needs to be wary of the issue of purveyors of violence.

“We do have a simmering expansion, extension among the purveyors of violence. They said those who disagree with them are considered kafir (disbelievers) and will surely go to hell. These are what I considered purveyors of violence.

“We have to be strong and committed Muslims. Otherwise, Islamophobics will take over the country. The purveyors of violence are also an issue that we have to be on guard otherwise it will be too late,” he said.

The prime minister also strongly urged government machinery and agencies to

use understanding and respect in handling differences to ensure Malaysia maintained as a united, multi-racial and multi-cultural country.

The forum organised by the International Institute of Islamic Thought in collaboration with the Foreign Ministry and the Prime Minister's Department was also attended by Deputy Prime Ministers Ahmad Zahid Hamidi and Fadillah Yusof.

The forum was held to address the pressing issue of Islamophobia in the spirit of Malaysia Madani in light of the recent public burning of the Quran by extremists in Sweden as well as other incidents around the globe.

- Bernama

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