



**An open letter to religious leaders**  
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Whatever we may think about Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's (*below*) administrative skills, he frequently stated in his speeches one of his deepest hopes for the Malaysian community, which was recourse to Rational Conflict Resolution.

Dr Mahathir Mohamad had to a certain degree made the same recommendation, acknowledging the shortcomings of the judicial process in such matters. Other leaders of different political and religious persuasions have issued similar statements.

This methodology of mediation is a skill as yet seldom practised or taught in Malaysian schools or among Malaysian social scientists.

Nevertheless, mediation offers an alternative process to the courts (which we, of course, need in our present conflict), following legal judgment with actual implementation of reconciliation among disputing parties.

We appeal to all religious leaders to avail themselves of these modern principles of mediation, which in fact may also be understood as the technology of "shura", or seeking consensus on a matter.

The first principle of successful mediation is a willing agreement from all parties to suspend blame, incipient "lust for power," and any hidden agenda to convert parties from one religion to another.

### **Away with conspiracy theories**

We also must willingly cease and desist propagating our personal "conspiracy theories" for the sake of a more harmonious outcome in service to national unity.

This is not a "battle for souls," except as a battle for the "soul of a peaceful and secure Malaysia".

Abdullah is now head of Ikim (Institute for Islamic Understanding), and perhaps Ikim under his chairmanship, and with the expertise it has, may be in a better position to establish a very professional mediation procedure for all religious leaders in the matter of the "Name of God," now pending in the Malaysian courts.

In recognition of the high degree of bad feeling that has arisen among parties to this issue, we pray Allah to guide our leaders, political and religious in assisting Abdullah in fulfilling the dream that he did not have time to address during his government rule.

Whether or not western society is in decline, those people have developed very sophisticated mediation techniques, which we now need to learn and apply, without fear or prejudice.

Taking inspiration from Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) advice when he said in a hadith, "Any word of wisdom is the right of the believer, who has the better right to it wherever it may be found," we need to engage mediation experts wherever they may be

found in resolving this serious threat to Malaysia's national integrity and dignity as a much-applauded model to other Muslim countries throughout the world, AMIN.

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