

Malaysia, Vatican Ties Good For Muslim-Christian Relations
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KUALA LUMPUR -- The establishment of diplomatic ties between Malaysia and the Vatican will enhance relations between the Muslim majority and Christian minority in this country, said Yayasan 1Malaysia chairman Dr Chandra Muzaffar.

He said this relationship should also spur both Muslims and Christians in Malaysia to combat extremist attitudes within the two communities and overcome religious prejudices and biases.

"Other hurdles pertaining to the misinterpretation and misapplication of certain laws should also be addressed with sincerity and honesty," he said in a statement issued here on Wednesday.

He said Muslims and Christians shared many common values ranging from the belief in God and respect for the individual person to a strong commitment to the well-being of the weak and disadvantaged and 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," he said.

Dr Chandra said that 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 were 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 have sometimes been rationalised through 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," he said.

Malaysia and the Vatican agreed to establish formal diplomatic relations to promote bonds of mutual friendship and strengthen cooperation following the meeting between Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak and Pope Benedict XVI at the papal summer residence in scenic Castel Gandolfo, outside Rome, on Monday.

(Bernama)