

# Malaysia accepts pope's apology

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**NEW YORK:** The Prime Minister yesterday said Malaysia accepted Pope Benedict XVI's apology for his remarks on Islam and violence but said that the pontiff should avoid future comments that could offend Muslims.

"I think we can accept it and we hope there are no more statements that can anger the Muslims," Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said after meeting US President George W. Bush on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly.

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*Abdullah*

57-member Organisation of the Islamic Conference, had demanded that the pope offer a full apology and retract what he said.

But Bush told Abdullah he believed the pope was sincere in apologising after the angry response of Muslims to his recent speech.

"When I touched on the matter during our discussions, I noted that it sparked intense reactions because the one who uttered it was the pope himself... The pope is not just any other person. That's why there has been much anger."

said Abdullah.

The pope has said he "sincerely regrets" offending Muslims with his reference in a speech last week in Germany to an obscure medieval text that characterises some of the teachings of Islam's founder as "evil and inhuman". He said last Sunday that he was "deeply sorry" over the angry reactions and the remarks came from a text that didn't reflect his own opinion.

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