

The pope must apologise, say MPs

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MUSLIM MPs from the Barisan Nasional and the opposition were unanimous in calling for Pope Benedict XIV to provide a full and open apology to Muslims over his statement linking Islam and the Holy War with violence.

They expressed regret over his statement, which had angered Muslims worldwide, demanding that he give an assurance that there would be no repeat of such a statement.

Dewan Rakyat speaker Tan Sri Ramli Ngah Talib had earlier

approved a motion moved by Salahuddin Ayub (PAS - Kubang Kerian) saying that the issue was urgent, specific and of public interest.

While the MPs hit out at the pope for his controversial statement, Theresa Kok (DAP - Seputeh) expressed regret that the House was still debating the issue when Pope Benedict had already issued his apology twice over his statement "which was misunderstood by the media and certain quarters."

Datuk Mohd Alwi Che Ahmad (BN - Keteroh) said MPs viewed the pope's statement seriously because Islam was being insulted.

"Muslims are sensitive over this. Pope Benedict XIV could have picked other quotations but he chose to cite the dialogue between Byzantine Emperor Manuel II and a Persian theologian on Islam and Christianity," he said during the debate on an emergency motion over the Catholic leader's statement.