

NEW STRAITS TIMES

DATE: 6/10/2007

PM: Crucial to follow true teachings of Islam

NST-6/10/2007



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi (third from left) at a breaking of fast with foreign ambassadors and Organisation of the Islamic Conference members at Wisma Putra yesterday. With Abdullah are (from left) Ahmed Amaziane, the ambassador of Morocco, Tahir Karimov, the ambassador of Azerbaijan and Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar.

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PUTRAJAYA: The present generation of Muslims are far from emulating their illustrious ancestors, who are respected for their vast contributions to mankind, the prime minister said.

Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said Muslims of the past were true believers in Islamic teachings, had aggressively sought knowledge as commanded by the religion, and brought about new scientific and technological advances that benefited the world.

"The present generation has not been able to do much to uplift the image of Islam, the way Muslims in those days did. We have to do more," Abdullah said.

He said Muslims the world over risked being left further behind if they failed to seek and secure knowledge.

Abdullah said Islam and the Muslims were deemed "important" the world over and had been discussed not only at the United Nations but many other global conferences.

"Muslims play an important role in shaping the world today, be it good or bad. We must always respond and tackle these issues in ways that would project Islam and the Muslims in a good light.

"Muslims must prove that we are assets to the society and nation in all that we do and show that our teachings extol peace and progress," he said.

Following the true teachings of Islam, he said, was crucial as the religion was growing world-wide.

Abdullah was speaking at a buka puasa gathering with representatives of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference at Wisma Putra here last night.

Also present was his wife, Datin Seri Jeanne Abdullah.

The gathering was hosted by Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar and his wife, Datin Seri Syarifah Aziah Syed Zainal Abidin.

Abdullah urged OIC members, especially those in conflict, to embrace the call of the religion to build on their brotherhood and avoid becoming embroiled in issues that create problems and stunt the development of their countries.

He called on them to strive to attain economic success, eradicate poverty and achieve knowledge-based societies.

He said that in wiping out illiteracy, Islamic countries must build on their human capital by emphasising knowledge, which would make them more relevant in the world today and change their image for the better.

The prime minister said while many Islamic countries under the OIC umbrella were doing their

best to resolve the issues which had hampered their development and progress, the results could have been better.

And, Muslim countries could achieve more if they were not bogged down by politics.

"We can do more than just being involved in politics, which has also caused Muslim countries to be in conflict.

"We must get our acts together and acknowledge that unity is more important, just as it is God's wish that we must be brothers.

"Whatever differences there are, the best way to resolve them is through dialogue, as demanded by the religion."

Abdullah said that in the case of Palestine, the contesting factions had to be prepared to face each other and talk and, thereupon, decide on what should happen.

"There is no better time to do this than in this holy month of Ramadan," he added.