

# PM's strong message on Islamophobia will spark action, say analysts

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's strong stand on Islamophobia can serve as the spark towards igniting awareness and action on the issue on the world stage.

Analysts believed that in using the 78th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) to raise the matter, Anwar could create awareness about the impact it would have on a global level.

Mujibu Abdul Muis, political analyst and Fellow of Universiti Teknologi Mara's Institution of Malay Rulers Chair, said Anwar's battle against Islamophobia was something he had championed since the 1990s.

He said the 78th UNGA provided Anwar with the largest possible platform to raise the issue which was timely given the current political climate.

"Anwar has remained consis-

tent (in combating Islamophobia), which was also seen during his time as the deputy prime minister. This is aligned with Malaysia's foreign policy where we have always stood up against the oppression of Palestine.

"His speech at the assembly can have a positive impact in terms of fighting regionalism and global Islamophobia, while also acting as a method of global solution," he said, adding that the stand would also boost Malaysia's 'soft power'.

Fellow analyst Dr Azmi Hassan reckoned that Anwar's speech was a direct jab at Western leaders who had turned a blind eye to the problem.

Azmi, who is senior fellow at the Nusantara Academy for Strategic Research, said it was a criticism of the differing treat-

ments given by Western countries on the conflicts in Ukraine and Palestine.

"The prime minister rightly pointed out that the world should be ashamed of how it was treating the Ukraine and Palestine issues differently.

"The differing treatments have rarely been pointed out by world leaders, save for Iran's Ali Khamenei and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"Malaysia may be a small country, but the prime minister did not hesitate to single out major nations for their different treatments of these issues, on how unjustly the Palestinians are being treated," he said.

Anwar, in his maiden address as prime minister at the UNGA, had voiced Malaysia's concern over the emergence of a "new form of racism" characterised by xenophobia, negative profiling and stereotyping of Muslims.

Penang Mufti Datuk Seri Dr Wan Salim Wan Mohd Noor commended the prime minister's speech, noting that other Muslim

nations should now echo the stance of Malaysia and Turkiye on tackling the issue collectively and effectively through the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

He told Bernama that all leaders in the Muslim world should stand up against the acts of burning the Quran as it would send a strong message to the parties in question not to repeat them.

"The Quran does not teach its readers to hate or have enmity, but instead, encourages tolerance and mutual respect among all human beings regardless of their religious, ethnic and cultural differences," he said.

Dr Mohammad Nidzam Abd Kadir, who is senior lecturer at the Department of Government and Civilisation Studies, Faculty of Human Ecology, Universiti Pu-

tra Malaysia (UPM), said the government's initiative to print one million copies of the Quran to be distributed around the world was one of the best in curbing the issue.

However, he said religious dialogue and debates should also be held with the main goal of recognising the points of mutual understanding among various religions.

"We need to state that Muslims will rise up to defend the rights of any religion when they are denied their or when their scriptures are insulted.

"This is because Islam itself does not allow the insulting of any religion.

"There is no need to condemn, but instead express our disapproval because it (condemnation) invites enmity (between countries)," he told Bernama.



**Mujibu Abdul Muis**



**Datuk Seri Dr Wan Salim Wan Mohd Noor**