

Wasatiyyah Can Succeed Through Concerted Effort
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KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 29 (Bernama) -- The wasatiyyah (moderation or middle road) approach will only succeed if all parties take a similar path, both at the national and international levels.

The hosting of the inaugural International Conference on the Global Movement of Moderates (ICGMM) by the government was timely as the foresight has put Malaysia on the world stage as was espoused by foreign delegates.

The three-day conference here gathered 50 speakers from various fields and 350 delegates from over 70 countries who delved on ways to maintain world peace and harmony with Malaysia as the prime mover.

The clash of issues between the West and Islam must be addressed through moderation with the movement becoming a platform for providing guidelines to put a stop to suspicion and hatred among each other.

In the larger context, although moderation should permeate activities at the international level, its scope at home cannot be neglected by taking into account the socio-political situation in Malaysia today.

The Institute of Wasatiyyah mooted by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak can be a positive step to support the movement of the moderates and its proposals should be translated into concrete actions, not left behind closed doors of dialogues or conventions.

National Defence University of Malaysia senior lecturer Dr Mohd Ridhuan Tee Abdullah said in Islam, wasatiyyah was a proven concept of moderation and balanced approach.

"This is the best practice in our day-to-day living. History has shown that the approach used by Islamic leaders in ancient times had been successful in running a country peacefully despite having people of different races and religions," he said.

He said non-Muslims could thrive under Muslims' rule and their well-being assured as was presently enjoyed in Malaysia, thus proving that wasatiyyah had been adopted by the leadership of the country.

"This is different from some countries governed by non-Muslims where the minority Muslims are persecuted and discriminated," he said.

However, he said, certain quarters wanted to see justice based on equality by expounding the concept of 'fair and square' which could not happen in this country.

"We must understand that justice is putting something in its rightful place. We cannot have everything on equal terms because a certain race is in the majority. This means the

majority will get more than a minority.

"When we have extreme claims such as this, it clearly shows that they do not understand the wasatiyyah concept," he said, adding that if these issues continued to be raised, it could undermine harmony and prosperity in multi-racial and multi-religious Malaysia.

In the political context, 1Malaysia Foundation chairman Dr Chandra Muzaffar said politicians should adhere to the principle of wasatiyyah based on fairness and balance through speeches and action.

"Politicians should not sacrifice fairness and balance to garner support and votes from certain races to win elections," he said.

Ulama Muda Umno secretariat chairman Fathul Bhari Mat Jahaya said the wasatiyyah approach would not succeed if it was not practiced comprehensively and globally.

"It will not be accomplished if only certain quarters are leading and adopting this concept. Otherwise, other parties will seek equality.

"Equality and moderation are two different approaches and the argument could lead to discord if wasatiyyah fails to be truly understood," he said.

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