

**Movement of moderates pointless if extremists still sponsored, says DAP**  
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**By Shannon Teoh**

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 18 — Lim Guan Eng said today it is meaningless trying to combat radicalism when "sustenance and even sponsorship is offered to bigoted and extremist organisation."

"There is no point forming a coalition of moderates while, at the same time, sustenance and even sponsorship is offered to bigoted and extremist organisations," the DAP secretary general said at the True Moderation conference in Penang.

The DAP has repeatedly criticised Datuk Seri Najib Razak's move to fight extremism by forming the Global Movement of Moderates, saying the prime minister's Umno was itself a danger to moderation.

The Umno president had said embracing moderation and rejecting all forms of extremism is the only way for the world to move forward and for all countries to co-exist in peace at the launch of the movement on January 17.

But DAP parliamentary leader Lim Kit Siang responded by saying Najib must first transform Umno-owned Utusan Malaysia, which has previously accused DAP of trying to turn Malaysia into a Christian state, to prove he qualifies as a voice of global moderation.

DAP publicity chief Tony Pua also said the following week that "the game that Umno and Perkasa are playing... is a highly dangerous one which may forever tarnish Malaysia's reputation as a moderate country."

Guan Eng also said today "we must be wary of those who use the holy books for their own private and selfish ends — those who speak with forked tongues and quote the Scriptures in vain" in his speech at the event held in conjunction with the United Nations' World Inter-Faith Harmony Week.

The Penang chief minister added that "true moderation can only come from knowledge and understanding" as those who are "ignorant and fearful about the place of his religion and of his relationship with persons of other faiths is bound to be defensive and extreme in his dealings with other faiths."

Muslims and Christians have repeatedly disagreed over the use of the word "Allah" to denote God in Malay-language bibles as well as alleged proselytising of Muslims in the past two years.

Several houses of worship were fire-bombed in early 2010 following a court ruling allowing the Catholic Church to publish the word "Allah".

Muslim NGOs formed Himpunan Sejuta Umat (Gathering of a Million Faithful) this year in response to "the threat of Christianisation."

Malaysia's 28 million population is over 60 per cent Muslim, but more than half its citizens in Sarawak and Sabah, long considered the ruling Barisan Nasional's vote bank, are predominantly Christian.

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