

**Farouk: Najib doesn't understand Islamic moderation**  
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**By Mikha Chan**

**Scholar and activist sounds a warning about Umno group's literalist Islam and danger of Islamic State ideology**

KUALA LUMPUR: Scholar and activist Farouk Musa, sounding a warning about literalist Islam within Umno, said today that prime minister, Najib Razak, did not understand the concept of wassatiyah or Islamic moderation.

Farouk, speaking at a public forum on Islam in a Constitutional Democracy, said wassatiyah was facing a threat from "literalist Islam" and cautioned against the group who called themselves Ilmu or Ulama Muda Umno.

He said: "The current problem is the intrusion of literalist Islam into wassatiyah. Whether we realise it or not, there is a body or group who call themselves Ilmu or Ulama Muda Umno. They are basically literalists."

Farouk linked this with Daesh, (the Arabic acronym for the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria terrorist movement).

He said that Malaysia must be very wary of the influx of Daesh ideology. "(Otherwise) we won't be able to fight ISIS. We'll turn into the next Syria. We have to be wary of that," he said

He called for greater intellectual discourse and respect for the rights to dissent in order move forward from "a static and stagnant approach to understanding Islamic law" and to rise above the conflict between Islamic and democratic traditions.

Farouk, who is chairman of the Islamic Renaissance Front activist group, commented that Najib Razak did not understand what he meant by the wassatiyah that he preached. "I don't think the Prime Minister really understands what wassatiyah is. We are nowhere near it. He did previously say that we have to emulate ISIS!" he commented.

Najib has previously said that he had, from his early days as prime minister, pushed the Islamic concept of wassatiyah, or moderation, saying that it was based on fairness, justice and dialogue over conflict.

However, he courted controversy with a remark last year, before terrorist activities by Islamic State reached global proportions, that Umno must emulate the bravery of ISIS if the party was to survive.

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