

## CLOSING SPEECH AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON DERADICALISATION AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

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Bismillahirrahmanirrahim.

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh,

A very good afternoon and Salam 1Malaysia.

Honourable Guests, Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

You have shared your respective esteemed national policies on deradicalisation, on bolstering national security against radicalism and on combating violent extremism in all its forms. In so doing, and in extending, in a sense, this privilege of privity, for which Malaysia is grateful, we have become a single entity, an extended global community with mutual interests, similar objectives and one goal, that is to wipe out terrorism. We have developed a deeper understanding of this threat and a greater sense of mission. We have come closer to identifying its many motivations and misconceived objectives, and a new appreciation of how, in so many ways, we can work together to deal with its varied causal factors and consequential devastating effects.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We can choose to label it terrorism, radicalism or extremism, violent and otherwise. But when these definitions become only too real, when thousands upon thousands of innocent lives are sacrificed, when respect for the rule of law is lost and the destruction of modern civil society becomes paramount, when the very essence of existence becomes so fragile we become crippled with the fear that it

might all be falling apart, then, and only then will the definitive lines of distinction between one label and another become irrelevant. Our efforts will be in vain should we continue to ignore what terrorism really is. I tell you now, there is no further need for labelling. Active and violent acts of terrorism by radicals and extremists alike, whether motivated by political ideology, or by deviant religious subservience, or, and I state this in its widest possible sense, pure insanity, are all different sides of the same coin. It all ends in chaos, and often, death.

Time and time again our perception of the true nature of terrorism is clouded by biasness, by the frailty of the mind. Often, we fail to distinguish between our interpretation of terrorism arising from fear and prejudice and being objective in acknowledging terrorism for what it really is. Terrorism is a violent and bloody rebellion which seeks only to oppress and destroy all who are opposed to its mission. Its existence finds being as the manifestation of ignorance, misguidance and misplaced hatred. Nevertheless if we look closely, we find that its essence, its desire for an almost utopian consummation of worldly sacrifice and spiritual rewards, is the epitome of passionate commitment. Yes, this is a passion arising from a deep-rooted adherence and a total but myopic loyalty to a mission, a mission that, often, most of them do not fully comprehend but yet, are devoted and committed 100%. It is exactly this passion, this overwhelming emotional reservoir in radicals and extremists that we need to identify and address. It is a strength and a weakness. They can be and must be rehabilitated, their passions can be redirected, their sense of commitment can be channeled towards better purposes.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is without a doubt that this is a battle on all fronts - in cyberspace, on the ground and especially in the mind. With such awareness, terrorists have come to employ and use technology extensively and in the process they have upped the ante. They use technology to disseminate their ideologies and in their recruitment drives. Ironically, they leverage on existing technological infrastructure provided by the very same governments they want to overthrow.

Malaysia shares the same concern - the exploitation of technology, and in particular, the abuse of social media and its various digital platforms, to garner support for radical ideology and its potential to incite interest in violent acts of terrorism. It is imperative that nations have in place, more effective strategies and

commit even more resources to counter radical narratives and prevent the spread of violent extremism via digital platforms and the internet. Malaysia has moved ahead in developing a counter messaging centre in line with its efforts to counter extremism in cyberspace.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The global community must come together with collegiate urgency, we must relook and reassess, we have to rethink and reformulate, for the facts before us have changed and so must our reply in response to this change, it must be different while our objective remains same. This struggle against terrorism is a raging vortex which if left to continue without newer and more innovative solutions, is most certain to transform into a maelstrom of utter chaos, destruction and misery. We must remain resolute, we must remain determined. Let us be very clear, our response remains the same, as it has always been, our objective, single-minded. We must, and we will stop them.

Over 2 days we have exchanged ideas, shared experiences and even reached new conclusions on different areas of discussion. We have indeed had a very successful and productive discourse. It is with renewed vigour and yet at the same time, a heavy heart, that I must now conclude this conference.

It has been a pleasure to host all of you in Kuala Lumpur for the International Conference on Deradicalisation and Countering Violent Extremism. On behalf of the Malaysian Government and the people of Malaysia, I take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation to ministers and representatives, speakers, moderators and of course, participants for your support and contribution in making this inaugural Conference a success.

I wish you safe travels and a pleasant journey home.

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