

**VERBATIM : SPEECH BY THE HONOURABLE DATO' SERI ANWAR BIN IBRAHIM PRIME MINISTER OPF MALAYSIA CHRISTMAS HI-TEA RECEPTION**

By : DATO' SERI ANWAR IBRAHIM

Venue : CCM ECUMENICAL CENTRE, PETALING JAYA

Date : 13/12/2025

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**SPEECH BY**

**THE HONOURABLE DATO' SERI ANWAR BIN IBRAHIM**

**PRIME MINISTER OF MALAYSIA**

**CHRISTMAS HI-TEA RECEPTION**

**13 DECEMBER 2025 (SATURDAY) | 4:30 PM**

**CCM ECUMENICAL CENTRE, PETALING JAYA**

*Selamat petang dan selamat sejahtera.*

*Rev Dr Eu Hong Seng,*

*Chairman of The Christian Federation of Malaysia;*

*Terima kasih Bishop Julian dan Bishop Ong dan rakan-rakan yang saya muliakan.*

1. Sebenarnya, Kerajaan dalam Mesyuarat Jemaah Menteri telah memutuskan Timbalan Perdana Menteri (TPM) Datuk Amar Haji Fadillah bin Haji Yusof akan mewakili Kerajaan untuk berucap. So, it's done. Tapi pada saat akhir, saya teliti acara dan beberapa tahun acara sambutan Krismas yang dianjurkan oleh Federation akhir tahun, jadi ramai yang tidak ada. Jadi saya kata, saya tidak ada pilihan. Jadi saya pilih untuk datang sekadar memberikan sokongan. Saya terbang dari Langkawi kerana ada retreat Khazanah yang belum selesai, tetapi memandangkan acara ini sangat penting, saya datang walaupun sedikit lewat, saya mohon maaf.
2. So, of course, I come here to express my gratitude. Thanks for your understanding and support. We work as Malaysians. We face the challenges together. I realize now that I'm at the helm, that leading a multiracial country is more complex, more challenging. When I used to come here before I became Prime Minister, I thought it was easier. See, the Bishop didn't tell me it was complex. They only assured me we continue to pray for his success and manage this country well.
3. We have had a series of discussions, but certainly we should be thankful to Almighty because whatever is said and done, this country,

despite its being complex, both regional aspirations, racial, religious, it is certainly, one of the most peaceful countries in the world.

4. When I was in Langkawi attending these meetings, there were three calls, Prime Minister of Cambodia, Prime Minister of Thailand and President Donald Trump. You can see why is this small, emerging country, emerging economy, has been given some trust and hope. Why? Partly because we are peaceful. They understand it's multiracial, multi-religious but still it is the beacon of hope in the region and that is I think, precisely the reason why friendly neighbours, including Thailand and Cambodia, place so much trust and hope that we can help ease the conflict.
5. Now how do we then sustain this? Your Excellency's ambassadors are here to your presence. The Christian Federation quite influential for so many representative governments coming here. I didn't know that. How do we sustain this peace and understanding? How do we make sure that this country was a peaceful nation? But, peace must have its dividends to assure that we do recognize the right of every single citizen that we deal the issues of racism and religious bigotry and place the importance protect the rights of every single men and woman in this country.
6. This is of course a major task because every single issue is always interpreted perceived differently according to the dictates and interests of each community. I gave an example yesterday when my remark about how do we deal with this language policy.

7. I view this as a language policy, not the Chinese or Malay or English. So, I trying to ease the concerns by saying that, look, why don't we all accept the fact that in Malaysia we all want to promote Bahasa as a language of instruction and also language of learning. So that in digital technology, AI, we can also teach in Bahasa and the level of proficiency of for all Malaysians in Bahasa should be commendable. Having said that, if there is a general consensus, so there is no anxiety or siege mentality or fear as raised by some quarters of other Malaysia.
  
8. So, we say accept this, which means if you went international school and you Malaysians, allow them to teach Bahasa. One hour a week. Not imposed on non-Malaysians, just Malaysians, okay? Having said that, acknowledge that when we accept another fact that in this globalized world, Malaysia emerging as an important trading nation, embarking on new technology, including digital transformation, we need our young to enhance the level of proficiency in the English language. We must do so not just as an additional curriculum subject, but with the aim of getting our students to master the language.
  
9. This is a very important second language, which means therefore the curriculum in schools, in colleges and universities has to be adjusted accordingly. You see, my approach is not zero-sum game. We start with the national agenda, Bahasa. We acknowledge the importance of English. There are calls among the elites, bangsa elites in particular English, nothing else but English. You don't realize, then the 80% will go up and say look, these guys have completely abandoned the national agenda. That is why I think crafting a policy, these sensitivities must be acknowledged. So, we have Bahasa and English.

10. And not a matter of just continuing the existing program, but to ensure that the level of proficiency. I reiterate this point. We are talking about enhancing proficiency in English language for our own survival, for the survival of our children, our sons and daughters in the global world. And it has been the option in many countries.
11. Now having said that, we also have. This is a legacy issue. It's not my choice, but it's from the beginning. We have international schools, English as a medium of instruction, and we have Sabah and Sarawak themselves. They have decided to use more English, which is fine. And then we have Chinese stream, and the Tamil stream. What do you do with them? And therefore when I said yesterday, unfortunately it's not taken in the total context. Those says, oh! look, look, look, Anwar, he's no longer a reformist, you see, he just talked about Bahasa!
12. Please for sake, listen, what I said is what I'm repeating today. Number one, Bahasa, number two English, number three Chinese, including UEC. I fail to understand why there was so much anxiety and anger by saying that, I've discarded our national policy. It's not true, but there is a difference. I don't believe that we will succeed if the Indians just talk about Tamil education period. And the Chinese government, UEC and ignoring the importance of the Bahasa and English at the same time. Give this allowance as space for our children and our parents to decide.
13. And therefore there should be as I said yesterday in the universities curriculum. allowance for Chinese educator to study Chinese in

certain subjects at the university level not only in Chinese language or Chinese studies per say, but some other subjects which would benefit us immensely in this competitive world and in the emerging economic power in China, for example.

14. So I look at it as something very practical, realistic. I believe that Chinese parents, for example, those who have Chinese school, would also want to make sure that their children will understand Bahasa and be proficient in the English language but if they choose to have this level of competence in Chinese. So, be it and it is the duty our common duty, to support their neighbor and similarly, for those who have decided to go to Islamic studies or faculty of Islamic Studies they can have Arabic some subjects and Tamil for the better.
15. So, that was what I said yesterday, but you see the narrative and the debate on the ground, completely silent on languages and other languages. So, just I give an example when I come back to the Christian Federation. There's just an introduction to show the complexity and you know, we Muslims, Christians here must accept one fact and reality. There is an issue of a battle between those who believe, who have faith, and those who discarded it completely.
16. There is moral deficit in this world, among political leaders, among corporate leaders. The issue of moral conscience, moral imperative, seems to be slighted, sliding. This is our challenge. So, we sometimes talk about big religious jargons, even among Muslims, but we condole corruption, endemic corruption. We tolerate those marginalized, oppressed and poor. We allow for perpetrators of injustices and

cruelty to continue unabated. So, to me, moral voice, voice of conscience is something that you talk about and we as Muslims need to do. And I think this is a major battle not only in Malaysia, but throughout the world.

17. One part, because we are dealing with the situation where there's, again, as I said is a moral deficit. There can be oppression, it happens to be Arabs or oppression or can there be Chinese or in the recent case, three Indians shot, it is not of concern and I find as a believer myself, difficult to accept or condole.
18. Datuk Amar Haji Fadillah bin Haji Yusof is here, I mean as a colleague in cabinet, I was very strong, but you can't expect a Prime Minister to go and condemn the excesses of some of our forces, except to give specific instructions. There must be transparent, open investigations. It does not matter whether the victim is Indian or Malay or Chinese or Dayak.
19. So, I think that is where religious leaders must have this all. I'm not suggesting, therefore, that we don't have issues or I can absorb from all problems. I do admit and I apologize sometimes we take time some enforcement officers seem to be lacking, but please be assured we do. I maintain this. It's just not because I'm the Prime Minister therefore I can conceit and condone this, I don't and I made it very clear my colleagues in the cabinet know that I express with some anger that these things have been tolerated and we don't want to showcase experience other countries, if you are a minority, you had it.

20. This is not the country where you think that there should be training of the majority or training of the minority. This country must stand to certain principles and values and that is why Malaysia must succeed.
21. I need your understanding; there has many other issues. Just giving one example, but to assume that we do it is wrong, I do accept, acknowledge some limitations, yes. But on these issues of justice on rights be it the poor, urban poor, those are the majority or the minority, we don't of course, it's a free country. Of course, not really free, we have to pray, we Muslims. Accept democracy. And I asked Datuk Haji Fadillah to consider the issues of MA63. Just a wide consensus, I thought that's what we promised in the past, we have to honour that although it takes time, but it's not necessarily supported.
22. There are many here that resent this and thought that this sort of policies would be at the expense of many other states. So, the engagement is important.
23. So thank you, Bishops, for this opportunity because I think this is an opportunity for us to engage. This is an opportunity for us to remind ourselves that this country is still a country that's tied to some faith and moral values. And I think, in order to succeed we have to have this engagement and value better understanding among one another.
24. I do believe is my conviction that the vast majority of Malaysians accept this, regrettably, the small minority, particularly among political religion, some in the civil society they choose to have their

voice loud be heard that represents to me a very disturbing trend of racism and religious bigotry under the voice of the majority, those with faith, with moral conscience must be louder, must be more effective and must be thinking, working together. And I can assure you the best of my ability, notwithstanding these criticisms that we are here and will honour our commitment.

25. Of course, Bishop was kind if you didn't talk about allocation. As a good Bishops, he says, you know, I mean, you must treat our guests well, don't unnecessarily embarrass him or get him to lose his appetite. But I do acknowledge, I mean, though we have not announced everything. I had to inform that it's not true that we have abandoned that principle.
26. We will continue to support and the Federation. I mean, at least because you didn't ask, I didn't know what to do. I think Fadillah was smart enough. He whispered to me a few things.
27. First, it's okay for the Federation for the activities particularly to inculcate understanding, moral values, faith, understanding, multi racial understanding. I'll give immediate allocation RM200,000. Itu kalau kata kecil, silap dia tidak minta. Kalau dia minta tadi RM10 juta pun kita bagi tapi dah terlambat (joking).
28. Thank you again for this opportunity, but I don't actually came without any intention to give these remarks. I thought Fadilah must

have done. But, I thought it was probably good that I choose this forum to discuss with you.

29. Thank you to express some of your concerns; to assure you it is my conviction that if you want to succeed as a country, you cannot follow the dictates and experiences of many of our other countries that survive based on this tyranny, extremism and fanaticism.
  
30. That's applicable to my mind we must be exemplary in terms of the MADANI concept of compassion, of strong values and I look forward to continue working with you.

*Terima Kasih.*

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