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Prime Minister

EVENT: Hari Raya Aidilfitri Message

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TIME:

On this auspicious Hari Raya Aidilfitri, we Muslims will gather at the mosques and other places to perform Hari Raya prayers and to offer our praises to Allah the Almighty. We will repeatedly proclaim the Greatness of Allah that "Allah is Great, Allah is Great, Allah is Great" and that to "Him (Allah) belong all the praises"

2. This is our submission for this is the basis of our belief, that the Allah we worship is Great. And all praises are for him.

3. Indeed all the wonderful things that we enjoy are gifts from him. Although at times we have to suffer calamities such as the loss of lives and properties due to floods and accidents and other mishaps, nevertheless these incidents have their lessons for us. They are warnings and lessons for us. These calamities would not have happened if we had not sought them. It is we who chose to build houses on the river banks and river beds, when we know that these places are dangerous if flood occurs. It is we who drive recklessly, without consideration for ourselves or for others. Therefore after being warned, at times repeatedly, we should cease to live on the river banks, stop driving recklessly and should not deliberately expose ourselves to other dangers. If we do not heed these warnings, sooner or later, calamity will befall us.

4. And we should not simply say that this is predestined. If we take care of our safety and because of that we are safe, that too is fate or predestined. At times we seem to want to blame God although the fault lies with us. Remember that all that is good comes from Allah the Almighty and the bad are the results of our own doing. The misfortunes that befall us are due to our own faults.

5. Indeed in this country Allah has bestowed upon us all that are good. Malaysia is a country where the soil is fertile, where the rain greens the whole country, where water and food is plentiful. Our country is also blessed with a moderate climate and is not subjected to destructive typhoons and earthquakes. With all these blessings bestowed on us it is up to us to achieve a good life. Actually our burden is light in this beloved country. We can live comfortably with little effort. And if we are resourceful and disciplined, we can be wealthy and comfortable.

6. Really in Malaysia we should not be too ready to complain. Certainly we should not deliberately create problems. Malaysians are more free to speak, to travel around and to conduct personal business than the citizens of many other countries. We are safe because we are protected by the security forces. There are no incidents where members of the police

would beat, kick or handcuff and chain the hands and feet of suspects as happened in certain countries. No members of our security forces shoot at people indiscriminately just to release their frustrations. In carrying out their tasks, they are firm, though they may be a little rough.

7. But just because of this should we defame those who protect us? Should we tarnish the image of the country by cooperating with foreigners out to discredit our nation? Actually, nothing will happen to us if we are not haughty and refuse to heed advise. We should not be easily taken in by foreigners who have no good intention or desire to help our nation's development.

8. Today many Islamic nations are facing problems. Their governments are weak, their economies are declining, their politics are in disarray and often riots occur with Muslims attacking and killing fellow Muslims, allegedly in the cause of Islam. There are those who plan the killing of Muslims during the month of Ramadhan. And in carrying out these violent acts they invoke the name of Allah, as though their act was commanded by Allah.

9. Is it true they committed violence because of Allah, or to protect the Islamic religion? Religion cannot be separated from the politics of Muslims. But is disorderliness a part of the Islamic politics which religion advocates? Are not efforts towards brotherhood and peace among Muslims more consistent with Islamic politics as preached by the religion?

10. Muslims are enjoined clearly and repeatedly to live harmoniously among themselves, in fact to be friendly with even the non-Muslims if they are not enemies of Islam, if they seek peace with Muslims. What is forbidden by Islam, which the coming of the religion successfully banished, was the endless enmity or feuds between tribes and groups who were too obsessed with their groups or their leaders. It is these groups which were referred to as the 'assabiah', because for generations their obsession with their feuds prevented them from reconciliation, even though none among them knew or could remember the reasons for their enmity. As a result, it is impossible to ever restore good relations between them. The arrival of Islam managed to rid this fanatical loyalty among tribal groups for several centuries. But it has reappeared in the Islamic world.

11. Thus it is to this day. The reason for the hostilities, rebellions and disorder in the Islamic countries today is because of the stubbornness of these 'assabiah' groups to the extent that it is impossible to seek peace and settlement. The existence of these groups is not because of adherence to the religion but solely due to greed for power. Because they are so obsessed with their own groups, many Islamic nations could not establish a strong Government.

12. This is the reason why Islamic nations are chaotic, weak and looked down upon. This is the reason Islam is ridiculed by others. And all these are not the wish of Almighty Allah. It is not fated. It is so because of the greed of many Muslims who refuse to follow the real teachings of Islam. They deliberately misinterpret and misuse Islamic teachings. And they are so obsessed with their own groups that they refuse to accept the truth, especially about Muslim brotherhood. Whatever interpretations their leaders

make, they accept without questioning although it is obvious that the interpretations are against Islamic teachings. To them what is important is the person who interprets and not the content of the interpretation. As a result enmities prevail between them and other Muslims.

13. It is clear that the tragedy that befell the Muslims are of their own creation and are not fated. They could have saved themselves but they chose the path that are not safe, the path that are against the teachings of Islam. It is appropriate to repeat that all good things come from Almighty Allah. The bad is our own doing.

14. Is it possible that on this Hari Raya Aidilfitri, while praising Allah, we could reflect a little on our actions that causes us to be weak, divided, and dominated and oppressed by our enemies. Hari Raya and the recitation of praises to Allah would be more meaningful if it makes us feel deeply remorseful and contrite.

15. In Malaysia there are Muslims as well as non-Muslims. Coincidentally this year the Chinese New Year falls on the day Muslims are still fasting. It has become normal for us to visit friends during their respective New Years. Our visits have no religious significance. It is only to create good social relations and to help bring about peace and tranquility to our nation. With the peace we are able to live happily and able to exercise our religious observances without any obstacle. On the other hand, we know that in countries where there is no effort to foster good relations, fightings often erupted, even though the people shared the same religion. Consequently religious practices are affected. Therefore it is important that we continue to do things that have always benefitted us. I hope Malaysian Muslims will not stop visiting their Chinese friends during the Chinese New Year, not to eat and drink during the day time when we fast, but to contribute towards creating a favourable climate for our nation.

16. The cordial relation between the various races of different religions in Malaysia is the result of the moderation of its people. Because of this moderation our country is not only peaceful but also prosperous. Let no one think that this situation will be maintained without our having to work for it. Believe me, if we forget and follow our base desires, our nation too will be hit by the kind of chaos that we see happening in other countries.

17. The peace and prosperity due to moderation are found at a time when the dominant partners in the Government are Muslims. This clearly shows that Muslims are capable of ruling a democratic and modern nation fairly and effectively. The notion that an Islamic Government, especially in a country with multiracial population, could not dispense justice and could not be successful is clearly not true. If Muslims really want to develop their nation and restore their past glory, Islam is no obstacle. Actually if Islam is interpreted without any political interest and the interpretations are used as a guide, there is no reason Islamic nations cannot be peaceful and become advanced and capable of competing with other advanced nations in all fields, including science and technology and defense capability as required by Islam.

18. We can be proud that Malaysia under the Islamic majority Government

is peaceful and successful. Malaysians are more prosperous than people of many other developing nations. And we may go on to achieve a higher level of development until we become a developed nation by the year 2020.

19. But we have explained that the developed nation we aspire to is not like the present developed nations, which although advanced have lost their moral and ethical values. The developed nation we want do not require our per capita income to be on the same level with other developed nations. The developed nation that we aspire to is a nation that possesses the same capability in all fields, with income that will give Malaysians a comfortable life, not burdened with poverty and more importantly its people holding to high moral and ethical values.

20. Unfortunately even while we showed good performance in our economy and skills, there are already unhealthy signs of deterioration in morality and ethics which could destroy our society.

21. There now exist in our society many social ills such as juvenile delinquency, loafing, 'bohsia', child abandonment, child abuse to the extent of causing death, prostitution, drug abuse, corruption, all kinds of fraud, divorce and single mother, runaways from homes, school absenteeism and other social ills. Although in the past there were these problems but they were not significant. We can accept if the increase in the number of these cases is related to the increase in our population. But what is obvious is that these problems increase far more than the increase in the population figures.

22. What is sad and shameful to us is that more Muslims are affected by these undesirable ills than the non-Muslims. Figures obtained clearly showed that the majority of those involved in social problems are Malays who are all Muslims.

23. We may blame the prosperity that we are enjoying. But the Malays are not the only ones who are prosperous. Other races too are prosperous, in fact more prosperous now than before and more of them are prosperous than the Malays. Besides studies show that these undesirable activities affected all levels of the Malay society, from the lowest income group to those from the millionaire families.

24. We could also blame the present increase in opportunities for us to indulge in undesirable activities. Drugs are easily available, boys can meet girls more freely, entertainment spots such as night clubs are numerous, urban migrations are higher and many other reasons. But all these could not answer the question why more Malays and Muslims are involved in undesirable activities than the non-Malays. All races in Malaysia are exposed to the same temptations.

25. We may be ashamed to admit that a certain weakness exist in ourselves that causes us to be more inclined towards undesirable activities. But whether we admit it or not, the public knows that we Muslims are more involved in activities that are generally considered bad and are also against the teachings of Islam.

26. A casual glance seem to indicate that the Muslims are now more

religious. But if the problems encountered by the Muslim society are considered, it appears that we Muslims place more priority to form rather than the substance in the teachings of Islam. We surely must know that form in Islam is not as important as the commands and prohibitions which are a part of Islamic teachings. If we strictly adhere to the Islamic teachings, surely our resilience against evil doings would be stronger and more effective. But because our beliefs are limited to form and are shallow, Muslims are easily defeated by their base desires when faced with evil.

27. That non-Muslims in Malaysia are more successful in avoiding base desires means that they possess something which we should emulate. While we easily copy what is bad from the West, for example the punk culture, we do not easily copy the dedication to education and work of the non-Muslims in Malaysia. Is it wrong and against our religion if we emulate the good things done by the non-Muslims, when we so easily copy what is bad as part of our way of life?

28. On this Hari Raya Aidilfitri we should be happy because we have successfully overcome our desires. We should celebrate. But at the same time we must be conscious and concerned about the ills that beset the Islamic community in this country and indeed the whole world. With this realisation and awareness we may be able to overcome the ills we face and build a noble Islamic society.

29. The Government has a role and responsibility to overcome these social problems. But the public, teachers, media and parents need to assist the Government. Let no one defend bad practices for whatever reasons. If we are responsible, we must admit that there is something within us that cause us to be easily defeated by the pressure of living in this age. Can this weakness be identified? God willing, after identifying it we may be able to overcome our problems.

30. I hope all of us will ponder upon this matter. In our joy celebrating Hari Raya and our successes, we should not forget our responsibility to combat the moral decline in our society.

31. On this festive day we Muslims in Malaysia should forget whatever differences that exist among us and we must be ready to offer our hands and to forgive each other. The challenge facing us is far more important. The challenge is to redeem the honour of our religion.

32. In conjunction with Hari Raya Aidilfitri, my wife, my family and I wish to seek forgiveness from Malaysian Muslims in and outside the country.

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