



**SPEECH TEXT**

**YAB DATO' SERI ANWAR BIN IBRAHIM  
PRIME MINISTER**

**FOR**

**INAUGURATION OF THE 2024 INTERNATIONAL  
RELIGIOUS LEADERS CONFERENCE**

**7 MAY 2024 (TUESDAY)**

**SUNWAY RESORT HOTEL,  
PETALING JAYA**

*Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh.  
Salam Sejahtera.*

*Alhamdulillahilladzi anzala ‘ala ‘abdihil kitaaba*

*Wa lam yaj’al lahuu ‘iwajaa*

*Wa usolli wa nusolli ala rasoolihil kareem*

*Wa’ala alihi wa sahbihi ajma’een*

**TYT Mariano Assanami Sabino Lopes,**

Deputy Prime Minister of Timor-Leste;

**YB Datuk Seri Dr. Ahmad Zahid Hamidi,**

Deputy Prime Minister I;

**YB Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof,**

Deputy Prime Minister II;

**TYT Sheikh Dr. Mohammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa,**

Secretary General of the Muslim World League (MWL);

**YB Senator Dato' Setia Dr. Hj. Mohd Na'im Hj. Mokhtar,**  
 Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Religious  
 Affairs);

Ministers;

*Distinguish guests, ladies and gentleman.*

1. *Satu penghormatan besar bagi negara kita dan kepercayaan rakan-rakan dari Rabitah Alam Al-Islami khususnya Dr. Mohammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa untuk meminta Malaysia menjadi tuan rumah bagi satu sidang yang penting, untuk meningkatkan kefahaman, hormat-menghormati di antara masyarakat Islam dan pemimpin-pemimpin agama sama ada di Malaysia atau Asia khususnya.*

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

2. The theme of today's gathering, unity in diversity, is paramount importance. It is one of the passing issues, a new 'Zeitgeist' marked with inter-ethnic, inter-religious and inter-political strive. I happen to be a political leader.

But *Son Excellence*, Sheikh, many political leaders have failed. We have seen from the era of colonialism and imperialism and that following that condescending attitude, the hypocrisy in dealing with issues in the south, the intimidation of people, the double standards of treatment people of color, of blacks, of different countries. You have seen the utter abdication of moral responsibility in Gaza, which is mind boggling, which has enraged so many people. So, I think this is a golden opportunity, an opportunity for religious leaders now to take them, to have the courage to advise the community and leaders. This is a great responsibility, a real *amanah*. We either would do something really effective and meaningful to our religious beliefs, to propagate the right values of humanity, of tolerance, of compassion.

3. Where is our religion? If we don't have compassion and *ihsan* and *rahmah*. Where is our religion? If we don't talk about justice and '*Al-Adl Wal Ihsan*'? What is the meaning of our religious belief when we do condone injustice perpetrated against our people? We in Malaysia is a multi-religious country. Muslims comprise of almost 60%. Islam is the religion of the federation. We have to

undertake the responsibility to ensure the Islamic practice is enshrined in the constitution. But at the same time, the leadership is committed to ensure there are no excesses. We respect the right of every single citizen, Muslim or Buddhist or Christians or Hindus. They have every right in this country. Now, what is the message then? Is this a belief, a practice observed by all? Certainly not.

4. We have heard, we have seen and more so my dear brother and Sheikh, who is not only a great *dai'e*, but a great scholar himself. He knows, he travels, he is trying to promote that sort of understanding. Because many other countries, religious minorities have been persecuted, being treated as second class citizens, denied their rights, insulted, abused. And let this be a message that we in Malaysia, although we remain steadfast Muslims and we want to adhere to Islamic principles, we want justice for every single citizen in this country. And this message should be loud and clear to my friends here and abroad, in the East and the West, that this must be respected. Whether Muslims are in the majority here in Malaysia or Muslims are in the minority elsewhere. You cannot expect us to do justice and you

- perpetrate gross abuse and injustice elsewhere. Of course, what's more pronounced is what's happening in Gaza. This is a colonial mindset mentality.
5. Rudyard Kipling wrote about “East is East, West is West, and the twin shall never meet”. That was probably in the 1930s-1940s. In the 1990s, Sheikh mentioned Samuel Huntington's thesis of the “Clash of Civilization”. The West liberal democracy must be in the upper hand. The Muslims, the Arabs, the Hindus and the Chinese will be defeated. What sort of civilizational understanding is this? I of course appreciate that many of my friends in Europe and America does not necessarily share this view. This is precisely the reason why this dialogue is of utmost importance. This is why we consider a new narrative is required. Because the intellectually dishonest will say yes, claiming that these cracks are inevitable results of the culture war. Similarly, the morally corrupt in our societies would be in support, benefiting from the ill that plagues the world today.
  6. Therein, excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, lies the crux of the problem. Those claiming leadership position in culture, in civilization, in politics, are devoid of the

conscience of a human being. In the Quran, Allah have exalted the children of Adam, “*Walaqad karramna Bani Adam*” (Surah Al-Isra, 17:70) and for the final judgment is not your class, not your color, not your wealth. “*Inna akramakum `ind-Allahi atqakum*” (Surah Al-Hujurat, 49:13) is the level of your dedication, of your servitude and your piety. The difference is acknowledged. I don't choose to have this colour, nor you white or black or coloured. But Allah have ordained in the Quran that it is ‘*Lita'arafu*’. You see the Quranic term, correct me if I'm wrong, ‘*Lita'arafu*’ is not tolerance. I tolerate because you are different colour, I tolerate because you are a different tribe. No. it is to know one another, knowing means to appreciate. There is a difference.

7. Now I don't claim that all Muslims share this view. There are Muslims who are tolerant, there are Muslims who are fanatics. There are Muslims who are terrorists. But they don't represent the Islam. They don't represent the majority. This is important to realize. Therefore, we will have to strongly encourage this. For example, this conference, when we talk about differences. Some says ‘*ikhtilaf ‘ajnas*’, some says ‘*ikhtilaf ‘adyan*’, which differences in race or differences in religion. Why must

Malaysia support the initiative by Rabitah to organize this conference? Are you promoting liberal views or pluralistic views? No, we do not. We promote '*Lita'arafu*'. We promote understanding. We promote '*karamah insaniah*'. We promote humanity and it is the duty, more so of the Muslims to present a character that is tolerant, understanding and more so, again, compassionate and just. It is therefore my fervent hope and I respond with respect and affection.

8. What the Aminul Amin of the Rabitah Alam Al-Islami suggested that Insha-Allah, the Kuala Lumpur Summit will be a permanent feature in Malaysia. It is important, pertinent in this country to promote the understanding of Islam, to promote a message of peace, to promote '*rahmatan lil al amin*', and to showcase and to be advised if this conference you observe among the Muslims here, among the Christians or Buddhists or Hindus here, that things need to be done to be improved. Let me say, I listen with all humility because I want to be like you, to be successful in this '*dunya*' and the hereafter.
9. I want to listen to your advice, to your criticism, to your suggestion, how, whilst we are trying our level best to



enhance our understanding of Islam and practice what is being ordained in the Quran, in the Sunnah. We want also to convey a message of affection, of compassion, of justice for all our citizens, Muslims and non-Muslims. Our priority other than that is to make sure we succeed. There are many in our midst who are living in abject poverty. We are deprived of the new technology, of digital transformation and the artificial intelligence. These are important in our lives, of good quality education, of public health facilities. And it is our duty therefore, to ensure that governance is guided by strong moral and ethical values. Read the country of excesses and corruption, abuse of power and arrogance of power. I stand guided.

10. I look forward to your suggestions and may I express again *'jazakumullah khairan katsiran'*, special thanks and appreciation to all of you to be present today. And may the deliberations give us hope for the future. General people are sick and tired of the bickering among political leaders. Devoid of moral precepts and conscience and the meaning of justice. They can talk at the top of their voice about democracy, human rights. We don't know what to believe anymore. So, let the religious

leaders take your place. Be more effective, courageous in your views, including against your own followers. You may be a Buddhist leader, you may be a Hindu leader, you may be a Muslim leader or a Christian leader. Justice is justice. Never in the name of religion, condone and allow perpetration of injustice and abuse against anyone.

11. May Allah help us.