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MULTIMEDIA ▾ LOCAL CONTACT ABOUT US ▾



[ACADEMICIANS](#) [ALL](#) [ANNOUNCEMENTS](#) [LIFESTYLE](#) [LOCAL](#) [NEWS](#)

Welcoming the PM's call to deal with Islamophobia

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By Thameem Ushama

The Honourable Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said that Islamophobia and all acts of hatred and violence against individuals based on religion or beliefs must be rejected.

He said Malaysia was ready to cooperate constructively and collectively with the world community in order to achieve this.

He added that Malaysia wholeheartedly joins the world community in commemorating International Day to Combat Islamophobia, on March 15, 2023.

He called on to enhance awareness of the world community and the need for action to combat Islamophobia.

He also urged the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to take robust measures to combat Islamophobia.

These statements serve as a wake-up call to Muslims and other world leaders to move forward by devising plans to tackle Islamophobia, which threatens global peace and harmony.

According to the Prime Minister, “Islamophobia is an extreme stance of hatred and anti-Islam, which is unreasonable and insane because it takes a rather hateful attitude towards Muslims and looks down on and insults the religion and beliefs of its followers, and so we are asserting that there must be readiness at the international (on this matter)” in *The Star online* article ‘Take decisive action in dealing with Islamophobia, Anwar Urges OIC’, published on 22 March 2023 (Accessed here: [Take decisive action in dealing with Islamophobia, Anwar urges OIC | The Star](#))

Muslims worldwide, particularly the victims of Islamophobia, applaud our Prime Minister’s timely call because Islamophobia is everywhere in developed and developing nations.

This call shows our PM’s concerns over the safety of Muslims living in various countries and sustainable world peace, as he is applying the notion of *Rahmah* in Malaysia and extending it to others.

Millions of Muslims victimised by Islamophobia perceive our Prime Minister as a saviour, and as a result, he wins a respectable place in their hearts.

Islamophobia is spreading, leading to unwarranted incidents and the emergence of violence, such as the burning of the Qur’an-the Muslim holy book, in Sweden, which drew condemnation from leaders and widespread outrage among Muslims.

Before the Qur’an was burned in Sweden, Islamophobia began hurting Muslims for over two decades. Muslims began to face unprecedented challenges due to the rise of Islamophobia, notably in the wake of the 9/11 attack in New York and blamed Muslims.

Since then, well-structured false propaganda has been made against Muslims and their worldview, spreading the myth that they are violent fanatics. Additionally, they are portrayed as terrorists.

Several groups support the phenomenon of Islamophobia with a religious slant, and some states, as is clear from media reports, are pioneering and promoting it.

Due to state-blessed Islamophobic activities in some countries, Muslims are stigmatised, vilified, and ostracised, and in some instances, they are publicly lynched after being falsely accused and delivering fabricated proof and testimony.

Muslims who encounter violent and brutal hate speech from officials attempt to seek justice in court, but it remains a dream because the judiciary is under the authorities' control.

In some countries, Muslims cannot obtain justice when the judiciary is unfair and unilateral; therefore, they turn to international communities for assistance.

Some international humanitarian organisations and human rights agencies attempt to address the spread of Islamophobia amid such state-sponsored initiatives. However, it is very challenging.

The grievances of these victims caught the attention of Malaysia's Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, who then boldly intervened in Jeddah with the OIC to address the issue at stake.

Indeed, it will be a relief to those who live among Islamophobes to have a world leader like Datuk Seri on hand to listen to their concerns and grievances and defend those who experience unjust violence perpetrated in the name of religion.

The UN, through SDG 16, focuses on peace to be established, which implies that all forms of violence and hatred must be eradicated and that efforts must be made to ensure peace, keep harmony and prevent conflict.

Although SDG 16, the UN calls for sustainable peace, which signifies ending violent extremism and bloodshed; this has not been fully implemented.

One must remember that not all people of other faiths or countries support Islamophobia, as evidenced by the example we will share.

While many countries contemplate how to combat Islamophobia-related activities, the Canadian Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau appointed a representative to advise the authorities to fight Islamophobia.

Educating others is undoubtedly an outstanding and groundbreaking effort. Of course, the Canadian Prime Minister has set an excellent example.

He merits the respect of all people who value peace. The peace-loving world citizens should honour him.

Justin Trudeau, announced that human rights advocate Amira Elghawaby would take up the post of Advisor with a mandate to support Ottawa's efforts to end Islamophobia and to offer advice on government policies, legislation and other programmes, mentioned in an A News article, 'After the increasing of hate crimes against Muslims..Canada appoints the first representative to fight Islamophobia' published on 23 January 2023 (Accessed here:

<https://www.anews.com.tr/islamophobia/2023/01/27/after-the-increasing-of-hate-crimes-against-muslims-canada-appoints-the-first-representative-to-fight-islamophobia>).

She is the first anti-Islamophobia advisor in Canada. Her appointment has been hailed as a significant milestone for Canadian Muslims.

Islamophobia, prejudice, and hatred in any form are unacceptable and have no place in Canada, according to Trudeau.

The Canadian government declares its solidarity with and support for Muslim communities nationwide and its determination to respond if Islamophobia, hate-motivated violence, or systematic discrimination is present.

All international leaders, especially those in nations where Islamophobia is rising, should consider following the Canadian Prime Minister's move.

This will help end all forms of violence, extremism and terrorism and establish peace.

World leaders should examine the Canadian Prime Minister's initiative and implement a methodical strategy to tackle Islamophobia.

It is important to note that many leaders are sincere but, perhaps, do not have a model for fighting Islamophobia.

Hence, they can consider the Canadian Prime Minister's recent action to combat Islamophobia, which is a commendable sample; nevertheless, world leaders may also develop new strategies to combat the problem of Islamophobia.

What is essential is that efforts must be made to develop a strategy to combat Islamophobia. Doing so will ultimately contribute to achieving world peace, which is every country's most significant concern.

While admiring, welcoming and appreciating the Canadian Prime Minister for this initiative, the world's peace-loving people appeal to our world leaders to contemplate what has been said by him.

At this time, the Malaysian Prime Minister's concerns about the dangers and consequences of Islamophobia should be considered because they represent the global voice of millions of Muslims.

The Canadian Prime Minister's sincere desire for a peaceful nation that embraces diversity is expressed in his following statement in a press release:

"Diversity truly is one of Canada's greatest strengths, but for many Muslims, Islamophobia is all too familiar. We need to change that. No one in our country should experience hatred because of their faith. The appointment of Ms Elghawaby as Canada's first Special Representative on Combatting Islamophobia is an important step in our fight against Islamophobia and hatred in all its forms. I look forward to working with her as we continue building a country where everyone feels safe and respected" (Accessed here: <https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2023/01/26/prime-minister-announces-appointment-canadas-first-special>).

Given the above discussion regarding the Malaysian Prime Minister's concern and the Canadian Prime Minister's action, world Muslims respectfully appeal to world leaders who cherish peace and harmony to consider designating representatives to advise the authorities on how to combat Islamophobia in their territories.

Another option is to create a consultative council of religious scholars, activists, and intellectuals from various communities. It can make recommendations on how to move forward with a strategy of moderation and combat not only Islamophobia but also other types of religious violence and extremism. ***

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