



PERGAS

جمعية العلماء ومدرسي الدين الإسلامي بسنغافورة

**PERSATUAN ULAMA DAN GURU-GURU AGAMA ISLAM (SINGAPURA)
SINGAPORE ISLAMIC SCHOLARS & RELIGIOUS TEACHERS ASSOCIATION**

MEDIA STATEMENT

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RELIGIOUS GUIDANCE ON ACTS OF VIOLENCE AND EXTREMISM

Any act of extremism in the form of terrorism by any party, whether they are Muslims or otherwise, should not be supported and should be rejected by all Muslims.

2 This statement is meant to express Pergas' concern on this current worrying development, and at the same time, to provide guidance to the Singapore Muslim community to be careful and not to be swayed by the IS propaganda.

Brief Background on IS

3 IS is the acronym for Islamic State. The formation of IS can be traced to the early invasion of America in Iraq, whereby a group was set up by Abu Mus'ab Al-Zarqawy. This group paid allegiance to Osama bin Laden, and was then known as 'Al-Qaeda in Iraq'. Later, it changed its name to 'Islamic State in Iraq' or ISI. However, in April 2013, it announced that it was going to expand its activities to Syria and since then, ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) was formed. The group then declared its name to be 'Islamic State', a sign that its focus was no longer limited to Iraq and Syria.

4 IS' short-term goal is to establish an Islamic caliphate, and its long-term goal is the establishment of Islamic rule in the country, under a single rule. IS sees greater powers and Shi'ites (Syiah) as threats to Islamic rule and calls upon others to fight against these threats.

Views of Muslim Scholars on IS

5 Globally, Muslim scholars (Ulama) reject and oppose IS. Referring to the latest list, a total of 126 ulama and Muslim academics have rejected IS. The Grand Mufti of Egypt, Sheikh Shawqi Abdel-Karim Allam said that the practices of the group are far from Islamic teachings. Sheikhul Azhar, Dr Mohamed Ahmed El-Tayyib described the actions of IS as discrediting Islam and the Muslim community. The same opinion is held by many other ulama from Al-Azhar University. There are some who have labelled IS as a terrorist organisation.

6 Besides that, Sheikh Yusuf Al-Qaradawi has also rejected IS, saying that the group's declaration of an Islamic caliphate is null and void from the perspective of Islamic law. The statement by the Qatar-based International Union for Muslim Scholars, signed by Sheikh Al-Qaradawi, explained that from the perspective of Islamic law as well as common sense, a caliphate cannot be established without the agreement of the Muslim community or the agreement of the 'Ahli al-Hil wa al-'Aqd' that consists of ulama, leaders and Islamic organisations. In fact, several scholars including Sheikh Hamza Yusuf, Dr Yasir Qadhi and Sheikh Salih Al-Suhaymi have grouped IS as the new 'Khawarij'. Khawarij refers to a group of terrorists who kill innocent lives.

Pergas' Views

7 As the organisation representing the ulama and religious teachers (asatizah) in Singapore, Pergas, is extremely concerned with this recent development.

8 Pergas is of the opinion that IS and any other groups with radical beliefs, that cause bloodshed among Muslims and murder innocent lives are carrying out acts that are against the teachings of Islam and have no links to Islam. Islam calls for justice, peace, the freedom of religion, and emphasises on protecting the weak and spreading goodness. Violent acts by IS should be condemned and the Muslim community should not support nor sympathise IS.

9 The fight by IS is not only inconsistent with Islam, but is almost similar to the warning of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) regarding the rise of extremists during the end of times. This group will comprise of youth who are passionate, good orators and will call upon others to embrace the rule of Allah. They will speak and present their arguments with verses from the Noble Quran but they themselves do not truly understand the meaning and context of the verses of Quran and the Hadith (Prophetic sayings). This warning was made in this hadith:

يأتي في آخر الزمان قوم حدثاء الأسنان سفهاء الأحلام يقولون من خير قول البرية يمرقون من الإسلام كما يمرق السهم من الرمية لا يجاوز إيمانهم حناجرهم

Which means: “There will come during the end of times a group of people who are young of age, have the most foolish of visions, their words sound the best that men have ever uttered (Al-Quran and Hadith), they shall leave the religion like an arrow leaves its prey, their faith will not go beyond their throats.” [Sahih Bukhari]

10 At the same time, Pergas would like to emphasise that it rejects any form of violence and oppression by any party or any religion. Each party will have to reflect upon and understand the reasons behind the spread of terrorism.

11 Every act of terror and violence will lead to more acts of terror, and every act of oppression in turn cause other acts of oppression. The issue of terrorism and violence in Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Myanmar and any other country will not be solved if tyranny, discrimination, corruption and oppression still exist.

12 In a study conducted by Dr. Robert Anthony Pape, a lecturer in Political Science and co-founder of Chicago Project on Security and Terrorism (CPOST) from the University of Chicago, he noted that only a handful of violent attacks were motivated by religious beliefs alone, adding that the main reason behind terrorism is the military action from relevant authorities.

13 Thus, Pergas is of the opinion that this issue of terrorism and IS will not be solved simply by military actions by certain authorities, aimed at eradicating IS. As long as the fundamental issues of tyranny, oppression and injustice that lead to

radicalisation and acts of terror, then groups like IS will continue to exist, and will alternate.

14 Pergas would also like to call upon Muslims to hold true to the noble qualities taught in Islam, and to reject any form of extremism and acts of terror. Extremism and terrorism do not originate from Islam.

Guidelines for the Local Media and Singapore Muslim Community

15 Pergas would also like to urge the local media not to refer to IS as their full name which is “Islamic State” or even as ‘Sunnis’. This is because their propaganda and ideologies do not reflect the teachings of Islam, which is based on the Quran and Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him), as required in Islam.

16 Pergas also urge local media to take more balanced approach in their reports by reminding that majority of Muslims reject IS and any other acts of violence.

17 In facing this issue, Pergas would also like to call upon the Singapore Muslim community to deepen and strengthen their religious knowledge by learning from qualified asatizah. Should there be confusion regarding any religious issues, the community should seek clarification from the asatizah fraternity.

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