

CONFERENCE OF THE WORLD FORUM FOR MUSLIM DEMOCRATS

23 - 24 NOVEMBER 2015, JAKARTA



2nd International Conference of the World Forum for Muslim Democrats

Le Meridien Hotel, Jakarta, Indonesia 22 - 24 November 2015



WORLD FORUM
FOR MUSLIM
DEMOCRATS



SPF THE SASAKAWA PEACE FOUNDATION



INTRODUCTION

On 22-24 November 2015, The Habibie Center, together with the Sasakawa Peace Foundation (Japan), The Institute for Policy Research (Malaysia) and the Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Studies (SETA) (Turkey) held the **Second International Conference of the World Forum for Muslim Democrats** in Jakarta, Indonesia. Consisting of an Opening Session, four Breakout Sessions, a Closing Plenary and a High Level Plenary that were held over one-and-a-half days, the objectives of the conference aimed to co-opt Muslim leaders and prominent democrats in Asia, the Middle East, Turkey and Europe to establish a platform for intellectual discussions and the promotion of democracy inside the Muslim, and between Muslim and non-Muslim world. The following broad themes were explored during the conference: (1) Islamic States (ISIS), Sectarian Conflict and Islamic Extremism; (2) Human Rights and Refugees (Rohingya and Syria); (3) Islamophobia and Minorities (focusing on Muslim minorities in non-Muslim countries); (4) Social Justice and Rule of Law (including that of non-Muslim minorities in Muslim countries); & (5) Way forward (including the role of the media and other actors).

This discussion report summarizes the key points of the Second International Conference of the World Forum for Muslim Democrats, beginning with the Opening Session before proceeding with the four Breakout Sessions and the Closing Plenary of the first day before ending with the High Level Plenary that was held on the second day.

OPENING SESSION

The Opening Session was graced by the presence of H.E. Anies Baswedan, Minister for Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia and YB Nurul Izzah, Member of Parliament, Malaysia (representing Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim, Chairman of the World Forum for Muslim Democrats) together with Rahimah Abdulrahim, Executive Director, The Habibie Center; Jiro Hanyu, Chairman, The Sasakawa Peace Foundation; Khalid Jaafar, Executive Director, Institute for Policy Research; and Kilic Bugra Kana, Research Director, SETA. Each delivered remarks before officially launching the conference.



Welcoming Remarks by

Ms. Rahimah Abdulrahim, Executive Director, The Habibie Center.



In her speech, Ms Abdulrahim extended her deepest condolence to the victims of the recent terrorist attacks that had taken place in France, Beirut, Egypt, Nigeria, and

Mali. She affirmed that such terrorist acts do not belong to Islam or any religion. Ms Abdulrahim expressed her appreciation to the presence of HE Anies Baswedan, Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia and paid tribute to Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim, the Chairman of the World Forum for Muslim Democrats, who, though could not attend the event, had kindly prepared a speech to be read out by YB Nurul Izzah, Member of Parliament, Malaysia.

Ms Abdulrahim went on to thank the co-organizers of the event, the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, the Institute for Policy Research and SETA. She emphasized the need for moderate and progressive Islamic views to find solutions to the global issues facing the *ummah*, such as the refugee crisis as well as violent extremisms that had been misguidedly carried out in the name of Islam. She hoped that through the conference, a stronger and more united platform could be established for intellectual discussions and the promotion of democracy not only inside the Muslim, but also between the Muslim and non-Muslim world.

Keynote Speech by

HE Anies Baswedan, Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia

In his keynote speech, HE Anies Baswedan expressed his aspiration for the spirit of the World Forum for Muslim Democrats to spread across the globe. He welcomed the initiative to hold the conference, noting that the world was confronted by rising intolerance, extremism, exclusivism and all sorts of expression of ideas that were against the ideals of peace.

HE Baswedan argued that the experience of democracy was unique for every country. In the case of Indonesia, for instance, the Minister explained that the country practiced 'Pancasila Democracy', whereby the state ideology of *Pancasila* served as the pillar to consolidate and preserve the spirit of democracy. The efforts of consolidation and

preservation, HE Baswedan noted, did not happen overnight. Instead, the Minister argued that Indonesia's success in consolidating and preserving its democracy was made possible due to several factors. First, the willingness to unite amidst remarkable cultural diversity. The founders of the country, for instance, agreed to adopt Bahasa Indonesia as the national language despite being in essence a minority language when compared to the majority language of Javanese. Second, the spirit of equality. Local kingdoms in Indonesia, for instance, were not abandoned when the Republic formed. Instead the Minister noted that these kingdoms were preserved as cultural entities. Third, education of electoral process. The exposure of the country since its independence to

modern ideas and electoral process, if not substantial, enabled the formation of ideas that 'democracy was the only game in town.' Fourth, willingness to accept result, win or lose.

We should, the Minister noted, outline and spread these lessons. He went on to state that diversity was not a problem; instead, it was a fact of life and should be cherished.

The Minister reminded the audience that the Muslim community had practiced the modern form of democracy since the very first years of the Prophet and the following caliphates. As such, the *ummah* should now look back at that spirit and tell the world that the Muslim community is able to hold on to and practice democracy. Lastly HE Baswedan appealed to the audience that the responsibility for democracy did not fall on the shoulders of leaders, agents or institutions alone. Instead it was everyone's responsibility.



HE Anies Baswedan
Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia

Remarks by Jiro Hanyu, Chairman, The Sasakawa Peace Foundation



Jiro Hanyu
Chairman, The Sasakawa Peace Foundation

Mr Jiro Hanyu highlighted the fact that the World Forum for Muslim Democrats was the largest forum focusing on Islam and democracy. He noted that the Second International Conference was attended by prominent leaders from three Southeast Asian countries (Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand), two Middle Eastern countries (Turkey and Iraq) as well as experts focusing on democracy and religion from Japan and Europe. Mr Hanyu expressed his gratitude and appreciation to the co-host of the event, The Habibie Center as well as to Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim

who had dedicated himself to ensure the realization of the World Forum for Muslim Democrats.

Mr Hanyu recognized that Indonesia's democracy, which had been built on good governance under a constitutional democratic system and economic development, could become a model for other countries in the region. It is important, Mr Hanyu noted, for Muslim democracies around the world to maintain democratic political system under any internal or external circumstances in order to avoid misunderstanding of and criticism against Islam.

The expansion of violence and instability as well as economic disparity had enabled the rise of extremism among youth, Mr Hanyu noted. These developments had intensified the preservation of conflict and terrorism, not only in the Middle East but also in other parts of the world. It is important, therefore, for the World Forum for Muslim Democrats to eliminate the penetration of extremism among young Muslims and ultimately to help build democracy in the Islamic world.

Mr Hanyu condemned the recent terrorist activities carried out in the name of Islam. He emphasized, however, that the elimination of terrorism required not only hard power through security measures but also soft power, through the provision of education and employment for young Muslims. For the establishment of democratic society worldwide, Mr Hanyu noted, a mutual understanding between Muslim and non-Muslim people was crucial.

Remarks by Khalid Jaafar, Executive Director, Institute for Policy Research

Mr Khalid Jaafar opened his remarks by citing HE Anies Baswedan's point that the decision of Indonesia's founding fathers to adopt Bahasa Indonesia (which was known as Bahasa Melayu in Malaysia) as the national language meant the language was arguably the largest Muslim language in the world, spoken by more than three hundred million people. Mr Jaafar also recognized the

importance of the World Forum for Muslim Democrats being held in Indonesia as the largest Muslim democracy and third largest democracy in the world.

The World Forum for Muslim Democrats, Mr Jaafar explained, was held with the conviction that Muslim states, despite their national, political and cultural diversity,

must take democracy to ensure freedom and dignity, sustainable security, stability and prosperity of their citizens. Security and stability enforced by dictatorship authoritarianism, Mr Jaafar noted, had often been no more than an illusion, serving to only delay a greater disaster in the future.

The challenges before Muslim democrats, Mr Jaafar realized, were enormous. They had to deliver justice and prosperity, eliminate poverty, and provide education, healthcare and other tangible social public goods. They were often, however, under intense pressure that was not consistent with sensible priority such as the demand for the implementation of *Hudud* laws and other symbolic aspects of *syariah*.

The progress of democracy, Mr Jaafar noted, was equally imperative for the integration of the *ummah* as an active participant in the international order. By the end of the century, he noted, the Muslim *ummah* would be the largest global community. The current global disorder, therefore, could only be overcome if Muslims



Khalid Jaafar
Executive Director, Institute for Policy Research

considered themselves as stakeholders of peaceful, stable and just international order.

Remarks by **Kilic Bugra Kana, Research Director, SETA**

Mr Kilic Bugra Kanat recognized that the Muslim world was at a critical juncture, referring to the conflicts and humanitarian crisis in Muslim populated regions, the refugee problems, the persecution of Muslim minorities in non-Muslim countries as well as other series of problems in different parts of the world. It was important, therefore, to have a critical conversation and hold exchanges of opinion/ideas among Muslims around the world.

It was not only about Muslims however, Mr Kanat noted. Instead, it was about how the Muslim world could contribute solutions to global problems, including poverty, xenophobia as well as international security. In that regards, the Muslim world could also contribute to the debate on the theory and practice of democracy. The question of whether or not Islam and democracy were compatible, therefore, was no longer relevant. It was the time, Mr Kanat noted, to move on to discuss the opportunities for Muslim democrats to contribute to the solution of global problems. It was in this regards that the World Forum for Muslim Democrats was critically important.

Mr Kanat believed that each country had its own unique democratization experience. Countries that



Kilic Bugra Kana
Research Director, SETA

had achieved a certain level of democratization in the Muslim world, such as Turkey and Indonesia, should not be considered as 'models.' Instead, they should be considered as sources of motivation and inspiration for the people who aspired to have a better degree of democratization in their own countries.

Speech by **Convener and Co-founder of the World Forum for Muslim Democrats, Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim – Read by YB Nurul Izzah, Member of Parliament, Malaysia**

In the Chairman's speech, which was read by YB Nurul Izzah, Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim, as convener and co-founder of the World Forum for Muslim Democrats recounted the recent history of a changing political landscape in Muslim world; the Arab Spring in Tunisia, Libya and Egypt, civil war in Syria, and the emergence of ISIL.

The Chairman strongly argued that the despicable acts of savage and wanton killing of innocent civilians including women and young persons deserved an unreserved condemnation. He called upon Muslim democrats to join hands with all like-minded forces eschewing all parochial boundaries of race and religion, in one resolute message: that such premeditated and cruel killing is simply not

acceptable. Muslim democrats must make clear that the actions of these killers could never be *jihad*; it was corruption of Islam of the most vulgar and savage kind. The response towards these disorders would determine the virtue of the World Forum for Muslim Democrats, Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim's speech said.

The speech went on to note that the struggle of Muslim democrats to establish and preserve their values would not be easy. All around the world, dictatorships and authoritarian regimes would not give up their culture of repression, oppression and violence even in the face of widespread protests of the people for change. They would, Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim noted, counter the revolutionary forces and try to restore the power and glory they have enjoyed for so long. The full conviction of the Muslim democrats and the establishment of democratic institutions, therefore, were a must. Muslim democrats must not allow the deep state or the terrorists to continue hijacking the course of history. They must chart a new course. Indeed, the Chairman's speech noted, a revolution might happen overnight but the transition to democracy required sustained efforts, collective will and steely resolution to let it take its course.

Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim further noted that in this turbulent world, the Muslim democrats must focus on what best for the *ummah*. They must strive for a humane economy and a clean and caring government. They needed to strike a balance between free enterprise and the demands of social justice. They needed constitutional guarantees for fundamental liberties, good governance and an independent judiciary. In that regard, Muslim democrats, while demanding rights for Muslims in non-Muslim majority countries, must ensure the protection of minorities' rights in Muslim countries.



Nurul Izzah
Member of Parliament, Malaysia

The speech went on to note that there was a need to reemphasize the true, peaceful and pluralistic nature of Islam. In that regard, the World Forum for Muslim Democrats must endeavor to encourage Muslim intellectuals and masses to return to the primacy of the Islamic message of freedom and *rahmatan lil 'alamin*.

Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim said that it was imperative to establish institutions of governance for justice, democracy and human rights in order to see the resurgence of the *ummah*. He acknowledged the experience of Indonesia in which the first cycle of the transformation, the guarantee of civil liberties and the establishment of basic institutions of civil society, had been set in motion. Nevertheless, there remained challenges to ensure democratic accountability, inequality, quality of education and the move to address endemic corruption.

Q&A

Can Muslim democrats stand up for the rights of Muslim minorities in non-Muslim majority countries, especially in Europe?

Nurul Izzah:

That is indeed a crucial topic. We will discuss more on that in this conference. We should open more channels of discussion in order to ensure the acceptance of Muslim minorities in the non-Muslim majority countries.

Kilic Kanat:

The conference will indeed discuss it in more details in the following sessions. We are very sensitive on that issue. In fact, the problem should not be the responsibility of only Muslim organizations. The rights of Muslim minorities, and any other minority, should be guaranteed because it is the guarantor of a better democracy.

Rahimah Abdulrahim: We organized this event, its panels and invited speakers according to the belief that the rights of minorities should indeed be guaranteed. That is why we make this event open to the public so we hope representatives from different minority groups can come and share their ideas and opinions.

How should 'Muslim democrats' define themselves and what are their responsibilities?

Khalid Jaffar:

The terminology of 'Muslim democrats' was indeed debated in the early times of this initiative. There are indeed various reflections of democracy. Each country in the world wants to have their own democracy, independent of Western conception of it. Muslims join this global movement of democratization by infusing Islamic ideas, values and motivation into the concept.

Nurul Izzah:

The term 'Muslim democrats' provides sense of identity and belonging. It is crucial in defining key parameters of level of success of governance. Yet, we are not here to promote certain model of democracy. Each country embraces their own democracy.

Jiro Hanyu:

'Muslim democrats' are democrats who value peace and democracy. Even in the Muslim world, the freedom to speak, choose and express ideas should be guaranteed.

On the risk of tension between Turkey and its neighbors.

Kilic Kanat:

It is a difficult geopolitical environment for Turkey. It must, however, ensure security without sacrificing democracy and liberty of its people.

Why has there been no political action on Syria?

Nurul Izzah:

It is a very complex issue. We have to understand that first and foremost we must condemn IS. The solution is to win the heart and mind of the people so they reject the jihadist groups' narratives.

On the prospect of political change in Saudi Arabia.

Khalid Jaafar:

What is important is that we have to continuously repeat the consistent message of tolerance and peace and to condemn terrorism and any acts of violence.

Nurul Izzah:

We need to go back to the basic. We need to understand the socialization process of these extremist teachings as well as the societal context in which the socialization process takes place.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

The Second International Conference of the World Forum for Muslim Democrats featured four Breakout Sessions featuring expert speakers and a moderator. The purpose of each presentation was to act as triggers that set the scene for the session's discussion. After the expert speakers had presented, a moderator opened the floor to all expert participants in attendance to discuss the issues raised during the presentations and any other matters related to the session.



BREAKOUT SESSION 1:

ISLAMIC STATE (ISIS), SECTARIAN CONFLICT AND ISLAMIC EXTREMISM

Breakout Session 1 was aimed at examining issues related to the rise of the Islamic State (also known as ISIS, ISIL or *Daesh*), sectarian conflict and Islamic extremism. Key questions that were to be addressed during the Breakout Session include: (1) What has caused the formation of ISIS and in what ways will it expand in terms of its influence and control over areas?; (2) Why is ISIS able to attract youth outside the Middle East to join its movement and why are young people drawn to ISIS' violent extremism?; (3) How does ISIS receive financial support for its terrorist activities?; (4) To what extent can Muslim democrat find counter measures to Islamic extremism and are democratic

institutions, good governance, enhanced social justice and equality, strengthening of civil and political rights etc. sufficient to defeat IS and its ideology?; (5) What is the role of the non-Muslim world?; and (6) What kind of international mechanisms need to be established in dealing with the non-state organization of ISIS?

Breakout Session 1 featured three speakers with Kilic Bugra Kanat as moderator. The speakers were Ufuk Ulutas, SETA, Turkey, Abolghasem Jafari, University of Religions and Denominations, Iran and Satoshi Ikeuchi, University of Tokyo, Japan.

Ufuk Ulutas, Director, SETA, Turkey

As the first speaker, Mr. Ufuk Ulutas emphasized that ISIS was not a religious group. In this sense, the attacks and other brutal activities conducted by ISIS should not be seen as representing Muslims. Mr. Ufuk Ulutas further argued that the Muslim community did not recognize ISIS as its representatives. He went on to detail his research on the extremist organization which focused on the obstacles faced by the international community when dealing with ISIS. The first problem, he explained, was that the international community was not

united in its response. For example, military campaigns against ISIS in Iraq and Syria worked in small groups and were often uncoordinated leading to ineffectiveness. The second problem was preventing ISIS' financial transactions, especially those conducted inside their territories in Syria and Iraq. Mr. Ufuk Ulutas suggested that while it may be easy to prevent external transactions by imposing economic sanctions, it was more difficult to prevent internal transactions especially as this touched on the sovereignty of nation-states like Iraq.



Ufuk Ulutas
Director, SETA, Turkey

In addition, Mr. Ufuk Ulutas expressed concerns about the current military campaigns by Western countries and their allies. He argued that, “Airstrike won’t be effective and it might convert people on the ground to fight back the coalition who fight against ISIS”. Thus, Mr. Ufuk Ulutas stated that there should be engagement with moderates in Syria and Iraq in order to effectively fight ISIS.

Lastly, Mr. Ufuk Ulutas highlighted to important steps that should be taken in order to prevent to the rise of radical movements: (1) Promoting plural concept in the Western world and halting the spread of hate against Muslims there (xenophobia or Islamophobia); and (2) ensuring the legitimate authority of the state since many rebellions and radical movements came up as the result of unstable failing states due to drastic changes in government institutions.

Abolghasem Jafari, University of Religions and Denominations, Iran.

The second to speak was Dr. Abolghasem Jafari whose research focused on finding solutions to the crisis facing the Islamic world. He stated that any violations/problems that were found in the Islamic world should be the responsibility of the Muslim Community. He went on to explain that his research had led him to conclude with recommendations that he divided into two parts.

The first part focused on short term solutions. Here, Dr. Abolghasem Jafari called on Muslims to halt clashes seen within the Islamic World. By doing so, Muslim countries would be able to focus on other fields such as science, technology and finding the correct meaning to various verses found in the *Qur’an*. This was particular pertinent as Dr. Abolghasem Jafari felt many radical movements such as ISIS, *Al-Qaeda* and others often misinterpreted the *Qur’an* to justify their actions.

The second part focused on long term solutions. Here, Dr. Abolghasem Jafari argued that the Muslim community needed to revisit long-neglected Islamic sources. For



Abolghasem Jafari
University of Religions and Denominations, Iran

example, in some Shiite sources there was evidence that Islam had long practiced the principles of democracy.

Satoshi Ikeuchi, Associate Professor, Research Center for Advanced Science and Technology, the University of Tokyo, Japan



Satoshi Ikeuchi
Associate Professor, Research Center for Advanced Science and Technology,
the University of Tokyo, Japan

The last speaker was Mr. Satoshi Ikeuchi. In his presentation he pointed out that ISIS had developed via two forms. The first one was what he called the ‘expansion’ form. Here ISIS’ influence increased after it expanded its territory in Syria and Iraq. It can be concluded, Mr. Satoshi Ikeuchi suggested, that the ‘expansion’ form was the material form as it was something that could be observed. The second form was what he called the ‘diffusion’ form. Here, ISIS’ ideas of *jihād*, global militant Islam and others were spread via means of the internet, TV, SMS and so forth. Mr Satoshi Ikeuchi argued that since the ‘diffusion’ form sought to influence the minds of the people it was much harder to contain.

Discussion

During the discussion that followed the presentations, the Breakout Session heard a number of comments and inputs from the other participants in attendance. One question addressed to Mr. Satoshi Ikeuchi referred to the Japanese Government's interest in fighting ISIS. Mr. Satoshi Ikeuchi responded by acknowledging that he was not a representative of the Japanese Government. Nevertheless he explained that the current government had issued a number of policies to contain the spread of radical Islam to Asia, especially East Asia and Southeast Asia. It was also explained that the Sasakawa Peace Foundation's interest in co-organizing the Second International Conference of the World Forum for Muslim Democrat was out of concern for the situation in the Middle East and its implications for peace and humanity.



BREAKOUT SESSION 2: HUMAN RIGHTS AND REFUGEES (ROHINGYA AND SYRIA)

Breakout Session 2 was aimed at addressing the issue of human rights and refugees which had been brought to heightened prominence over the past year due to the plight of the Rohingya and Syrian people. In particular, the acceptance of refugees has been problematic for both Southeast Asia and Europe. In the case of the former, although ASEAN member-states such as Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia have offered temporary shelter for one year to the Rohingya refugees, there have been some cases of refugees being sent back to the ocean. There are also concerns that these relatively still developing nations are ill-equipped to receive and accommodate such a substantial amount of refugees. In the case of Europe, the 11.8 million Syrian refugees represent only less than 6% of those living in the EU. However, due to negative perceptions towards Muslims among some Europeans, especially the far-right, there has been pressure on governments not to accept Syrian refugees.

Key questions that were to be addressed during the Breakout Session include: (1) How can governments address negative public perceptions towards refugees, particularly those from Muslim countries and especially the view that refugees pose a terrorist threat?; (2) How do differences in cultures and religions affect the way refugees are treated in receiving countries and what can be done to resolve such problems?; (3) How can genuine asylum seekers be distinguished



from economic migrants and potential terrorist groups that attempt to exploit the generosity of governments offering asylum?; (4) How can relatively developing nations such as those found in Southeast Asia address the challenges they face in receiving refugees?; and (5) How can the international community work together to provide refugees and asylum seekers with safety and security and ensure their human rights are protected?

Breakout Session 2 featured three speakers with Thomas Vargas, Country Representative, UNCHR Indonesia as moderator. The speakers were Kamarudin Jaffar, Member of Parliament, Malaysia, Thorsten Hutter, Deputy Head, German Embassy to Indonesia, and Febionesta, Chairperson, SUAKA (Indonesian Civil Society Network for Refugees Protection), Indonesia.

Kamarudin Jaffar, Member of Parliament, Malaysia

The first to speak in Breakout Session 2 was Mr. Kamarudin Jaffar who began his presentation by mentioning that Islam was open to all forms of refugees and vulnerable people. According to him, individuals have the right to both seek and be granted asylum in any Muslim state, and further it was the duty of Muslims to accept and protect refugees as long as they needed refuge. Unfortunately, Mr. Kamarudin Jaffar noted this attitude was rarely practiced by the majority of Muslim states today. He argued that the gap between the Islamic

concepts of refugees with that of the widely accepted definition of a refugee was a major cause for the Muslim world's indifference.

He also stressed that migration and refugee was not a new phenomenon. Even in the early Islamic history, the Muslims in Mecca sought refuge from the persecution by their non-Muslim leaders, which pushed them to migrate to Abyssinia.

It was observed that Syrian refugees amounted to the biggest number and spread across Europe. Germany had responded positively by welcoming refugees, although this had affected Chancellor Angela Merkel's popularity which had plummeted to its lowest levels. Indeed there was growing criticism within Germany following the Chancellor's refugee policy. The same situation was also applicable to the Rohingya situation. Mr. Kamarudin Jaffar stated that countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia were aware about the crisis and were doing their best to stop this tragic humanitarian crisis from happening. However, Myanmar was still seen as being unwelcome to the Rohingya, forcing them to flee from the country, despite the recent democratic elections.

As part of the solution, Mr. Kamarudin Jaffar suggested that the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) should wake up and take on the issue. He argued that the United Nations or individual countries should not be expected to take a stance. Further, Muslim countries must improve themselves by being more democratic



Kamarudin Jaffar
Member of Parliament, Malaysia

and stable in their economy. He argued that poverty and unemployment is the major cause that attracted young people to carry out terrorist acts

Thorsten Hutter, Deputy Head of the German Embassy to Indonesia

Second to speak in Breakout Session 2 was Mr. Thorsten Hutter. He started off his presentation by stating that the refugee crisis was closely related to the issue of human rights. The current crisis exposed governments' responsibilities and undertakings. However, the capacity of states to receive refugees was limited, especially as the conflict in Syria was being exported to neighboring countries.

Mr. Thorsten Hutter proceeded by exploring the concept of Responsibility to Protect (R2P). The need for the R2P concept emerged when national governments failed to protect their own population. In this situation, the responsibility to protect fell to the international community. In Mr. Thorsten Hutter's view, the promotion of the R2P concept brought the issues of migration and refugee to the international attention.

It was further explained that Germany was trying to solve the refugee issue with its EU partners. However this was becoming difficult as the refugee numbers swelled. The situation was exacerbated by the fact that some terrorists that had carried out attacks on European soil had entered the continent by pretending to be refugees. Related to this was the political situation in many EU countries where right wing parties were becoming increasingly popular.

Mr. Thorsten Hutter concluded by expressing Germany's stance with regards to the refugee issue. He stated that



Thorsten Hutter
Deputy Head of the German Embassy to Indonesia

while Germany had the strength and commitment to address the issue, it was not able to handle it alone. In this sense a combined approach was needed, including working together with moderate people. He called on everyone to recognize that the world was facing a humanitarian crisis that needed cooperation to find a long term solution. He ended by arguing that as part of the human rights structure under international laws and norms, the responsibility to protect people falls upon all of us when governments fail to do so themselves.

Febionesta, Chairperson, SUAKA (Indonesian Civil Society Network for Refugee Protection), Indonesia

The last to speak was Mr. Febionesta who began by explaining how the Syrian war and continuous persecution in other parts of the world had increased the number of people seeking asylum and refuge around the world. This included in Indonesia. He found that the

attitudes towards the Rohingya refugee in Indonesia were divided between the military and civil groups.

For example, while the Indonesian military had initially refused to allow the Rohingyas into the country, the

country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs was more open and had applied a burden sharing policy. In addition, the local people, Mr. Febionesta noted, had been helping the refugees by providing them with necessary assistance on their own.

Mr. Febionesta noticed however some challenges in these efforts. First there was the absence of operational legal frameworks concerning refugees. This absence created difficulties in fulfilling the rights of the Rohingyas. Not to mention was the inadequate standard of living, such as housing, health care, and source of income provided to the refugees.

He went on to explain that many Rohingyas refugees had started to find a way to escape to Malaysia, where their families are waiting for reunification. However, these efforts also opened up many more risks. The existence of religious extremist who spread religious sentiment among them was becoming a concern. Such acts, Mr. Febionesta said, put refugees in a difficult position as some feared they could easily be affiliated by intolerant thinking.

Based on the issues identified in his presentation, Mr. Febionesta offered some necessary measures that countries like Indonesia should adopt. First, it was important to formulate domestic legal framework to



deal with asylum seekers and refugees, and considering international standards for refugee rights protection. It must also be done by harmonizing other laws and regulations that may impact refugees. Second of all, it was also crucial to raise people's awareness on what refugees are, and the need to mobilize solidarity based on humanity. In other words, concern for refugees should not simply be based on religious sentiment.

Discussion

During the discussion that followed the presentations, the Breakout Session heard a number of comments and inputs from the other participants in attendance. In the first round of questions participants asked, among others: as one of the biggest Muslim population majority, is Malaysia planning to have any meetings that bring together Muslim countries to talk about possible solutions to the refugee issue? Was it possible to end conflict in the Syria without resorting to military means? How does the Sunni-Shia dynamic affect the refugee situation in Indonesia, especially in the long term? What role does the UNHCR play in facilitating the reunification of refugees with their families? Were there any scenarios to provide decent living for refugees? The first round also heard a comment about the differences between ASEAN and the EU, with the former lacking the developed infrastructure and sufficient understanding possessed by the latter. In this sense it was suggested that it would be highly beneficial to take lessons from both regions and use the perspectives to solve the issues.

In response to the first round of questions, Mr. Kamarudin Jaffar explained that Malaysia had taken in a total of 3,000 Syrian refugees over the past three years but lamented the fact that there had not been any cooperation at the regional level of ASEAN or with the OIC. Mr. Thorsten Hutter meanwhile argued that military means was used only as a last resort when diplomatic efforts had failed. He explained that there had been negotiations held in Vienna and he expressed his hopes that these talks would lead to a settlement. However, he argued that it was impossible to negotiate with ISIS and therefore there was no other alternative other than to fight the extremist group. He also called on for Muslim experts and moderates to speak out about crimes that was being perpetrated in the name of their religion.

Mr. Febionesta took issue with the Sunni-Shia dynamic and opined the conflict was being generated by others to take advantage of the situation. He warned against the spread of anti-Shia movements in Indonesia and called on the government and society not to embrace such exclusivism thinking. Mr. Febionesta also called on regional frameworks to be more open to the participation of civil society so as to share the burden of governments. He highlighted the integrated community service initiative that SUAKA had carried out called *Aksi Cepat Tanggap* (ACT) which he described as an effective solution to integrate local Acehnese with Rohingyas refugees.

On the role of the UNHCR, Mr. Thomas Vargas explained that they have been trying to work with the government Resettlement was mostly the first option, but in many cases the Rohingya refugees wished to move to Malaysia instead. He further explained that UNHCR has no power to force countries to resettle refugees and this often led to refugees taking matters into their own hands by trying to escape to Malaysia. Mr. Thomas Vargas stated the recent boat crisis should be a wakeup call for governments to take a closer look at finding solutions, but he warned that the current dynamics of the refugee situation made it unlikely to push the international community to decide the solution.

In the second round of questions, the Breakout Session heard a question about how governments could make the Rohingya refugees resettle in new countries rather than be repatriated to Myanmar. Here Mr. Thomas Vargas explained that there was still a long way to go but he was hopeful that the recent election in Myanmar would improve the situation. He said that it was important to encourage everyone including ASEAN to play a role and step up their actions in finding a solution.

BREAKOUT SESSION 3:

ISLAMOPHOBIA AND MINORITIES

(MUSLIM MINORITIES IN NON-MUSLIM COUNTRIES)

Breakout Session 3 was aimed at addressing the sense of animosity towards Muslims in Europe and the West, which had arguably increased as a result of recent terror attacks in Paris, France on November 13th 2015. In particular many far-right organizations, especially in France and other European countries have witnessed increasing cases of Islamophobia, urging their government to stop the flow of Muslim refugees come to Europe after the event. In the past year there have been a number of online videos that have gone viral and show Muslims being abused in public such as on public transportation.

Moreover, Islamophobia has become a topic of increasing sociological and political importance since many studies suggested that the anti-Muslim prejudice among majority populations (especially in Western countries) is primarily explained by the perception of Muslims as a cultural threat, rather than political or economic threat. The negative perception of Islam has become a major worry to the Muslim minorities that live in non-Muslim countries. Key questions to be addressed in the Breakout Session included: What is the Western depiction of Islam in general and why is the Muslim society often blamed for actions conducted by the radical Islamic movement?; How do Muslim society, especially in non-Muslim world, see the terrorist activities launched by ISIS, Al-Qaeda, and other extremist group and do they do enough to distance themselves from attacks carried out in their religion?; What role do the media play



in increasing the sense of Islamophobia in non-Muslim countries and should they play a greater role in creating a more positive, realistic and informed portrayal of Muslims in non-Muslim countries?; What is the possible solution to reduce the rising cases of Islamophobia in non-Muslim countries?

Breakout Session 3 featured two speakers with Shada Islam, Director, Friends of Europe, Belgium as moderator. The two speakers were Akifumi Ikeda, President, Toyo Eiwa University, Japan and Rahimah Abdulrahim, Executive Director, The Habibie Center.

Akifumi Ikeda, President, Toyo Eiwa University, Japan

The first to speak in Breakout Session 3 was Mr. Akifumi Ikeda. In his presentation, Mr. Akifumi Ikeda explained to the audience that the Muslim population in Japan was increasing at a high rate. Despite this, Mr. Akifumi Ikeda stated that the Japanese were not too concerned by the increasing rate of Muslims in the country, arguably because they still represented a small percentage of the overall population. He went on to describe how Japan was open to its Muslim population. For example, it was noted that *Halal* food was more easily available in the country and that more mosques/Muslim prayer facilities were increasingly found in public places such as in airports.

In general, Mr. Akifumi Ikeda argued that there was no Islamophobic sentiments in Japan. However he observed that religion had increasingly been employed by politicians and in this sense, religious issues had become more complicated to address.



Akifumi Ikeda
President, Toyo Eiwa University, Japan

Shada Islam, Director, Friends of Europe, Belgium

Following the presentation from the first speaker, Ms. Shada Islam added some of her own views and thoughts. She explained that the European Union (EU) was facing multiple crises, including the possible 'Brexit' whereby the United Kingdom was considering leaving the EU. These multiple crises were happening at a time when the EU was facing a major refugee issue. In this sense, the arrival of refugees had increased tensions among European politicians and policy makers.

Ms. Shada Islam argued that more people needed to be aware that an extremist should not be considered as a Muslim. In this sense it was important to distinguish the two. Unfortunately Ms. Shada Islam highlighted the fact that extremist groups often claimed themselves to be Muslims. She went on to highlight the lack of knowledge about Islam in Europe, which consequently led to negative depictions of the religion.

She ended by calling on people of all faiths – whether Muslims, Christians or followers of other religions -who believe in tolerance to speak up and drown out the voices of extremism.



Shada Islam
Director, Friends of Europe, Belgium

Rahimah Abdulrahim, Executive Director, The Habibie Center, Indonesia

The last to present in Breakout Session 3 was Ms. Rahimah Abdulrahim. She recalled how after the 9/11 tragedy, many Muslims had become victims to Islamophobic attacks. In her view, anti-Muslim sentiment could be seen in many places after the 911 attacks. Ms. Rahimah Abdulrahim lamented the fact that too many people relied on the American depiction of Islam. In this sense there was a need for better understanding. She underlined that when understanding was lacking, problems easily came up.

Ms. Rahimah Abdulrahim went on to explain the Indonesian case. She highlighted the role of Indonesia's state ideology *Pancasila* which was drilled into its citizens from an early age. Ms. Rahimah Abdulrahim explained that *Pancasila* helped to promote tolerance which was why Indonesians could be friends with one another despite being from different religious groups. She ended by calling on Muslims to act as Muslims and to be better representatives of their faith.



Rahimah Abdulrahim
Executive Director, The Habibie Center, Indonesia

Discussion

During the discussion that followed the presentations, the Breakout Session heard a number of comments and inputs from the other participants in attendance. One member of the audience underlined that real Muslims believed in peace and in this sense extremists should not be considered Muslims. Another member of the audience commented that ISIS was not a part of Islam as the religion did not allow the killing of women and children. It was also commented that Shia should not be considered as part of Islam.

The Breakout Session also heard the view that the problems in many countries was related to majorities oppressing the minorities. This was not only a problem in the Muslim World but also in non-Muslim countries. Meanwhile a follower of *Baha'i* explained the difficulties

of living in Indonesia as it was not recognized by the government as one of the six officially sanctioned religions. Lastly, one member of the audience commented that Indonesia, as a country which promoted tolerance, should be more responsible for promoting an inclusive world. Despite this, it was pointed out that many people did not know much about Indonesia and often equated Muslims as being Arab.

In response to the comments and questions, Ms. Rahimah Abdulrahim acknowledged that many people equated Islam as a religions with Arab as a culture. She opined that this thinking came about from laziness and lack of understanding. She went on to argue that learning about other religions was also the responsibility of Muslims and not just the other way around. She pointed out that

understanding other religions did not make her any less of a Muslim. She called on people to go beyond tolerance and suggested Europe could learn from Indonesia on how to treat minorities.

Ms. Rahimah Abdulrahim went on to argue that in many issues, religion had been wrongly identified as a source of the problem. For example, she felt that the Palestine-Israel conflict was not a religious issue but was instead a territorial issue. Lastly she argued that there should be more cooperation between the Muslim and non-Muslim world on non-religious issues such as climate change. She highlighted the call of one prominent Muslim leader in Indonesia, Din Syamsudin, who had called on other religious leaders to work on issues such as climate change and sustainable development.

Meanwhile, Ms. Shada Islam explained that the attack on Paris had involved soft targets. She pointed out that the attackers did not target political/government buildings but instead places where the public socialized with their friends and families. After the Paris attack, the discussion on intelligence in Europe arised. Ms. Shada highlighted the view that cross border intelligent had failed in the EU and blamed the secretive nature of the intelligence services. Lastly she argued that the EU was stuck with the current integration narrative and needed a new one. She called on the EU to look at the Indonesian example, explaining that the US and UK approach should no longer be considered as role models for Europe.



BREAKOUT SESSION 4: SOCIAL JUSTICE AND RULE OF LAW (NON-MUSLIM MINORITY IN MUSLIM COUNTRIES)

Breakout Session 4 sought to focus on the issue of social justice and the rule of law, in particular for non-Muslim minorities in Muslim countries. Remembering that Islam asks its believers to stand witness to justice, fairness and equality – not just in words but also in practice – the Breakout Session aimed to address this within the context of rising inequality and human rights problems across the globe. Prominent problems the Breakout Session sought to address was the fact that wealth was concentrated in the hands of the few, while millions still live in poverty, refugees continued to risk their lives in dangerous journeys to escape conflicts, while ethnic and religious persecutions still persist around the world. As such the issue of social justice and the rule of law are important challenges for the world today and related to improving the quality of governance and developing solutions against poverty as well as ensuring the protection of human rights for all, including for ethnic and religious minorities.

Key questions to be addressed in the Breakout Session included: (1) What are Islam views on social justice? (2) What are the latest developments in the global struggle against poverty? (3) What are the challenges in ensuring the protection of human rights, especially for ethnic and religious minorities and what are the best practices?; How can the Muslim world contribute to promote social and global justice and how can we promote global partnership for social justice?



Breakout Session 4 featured three speakers with Endy Bayuni, former Chief Editor, Jakarta Post, Indonesia as moderator. The three speakers were Mohammad Reza Dehshiri, Deputy Dean, School of International Relations (Tehran, Iran) in Academic Cooperation, Azyumardi Azra, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, Indonesia and Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah, former Deputy Minister of Higher Education, Malaysia.

Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah, former Deputy Minister of Higher Education, Malaysia

First to speak in Breakout Session 4 was Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah. He began by discussing the notion of humans as the *caliph* on Earth. He went on to point to several reports on human rights and GDP growth in ASEAN countries. Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah highlighted that among the top ten states in the Fairness in Rule of Law index by Human Rights Watch, none came from Muslim countries. The same was seen in the top ten countries for GDP performance. Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah argued that these reports showed that Muslim countries did not give a true reflection of what Islam was supposed to represent.

The Breakout Session went on to discuss the differences between Muslim and non-Muslim countries in the terms of eliminating intolerance and ensuring religious freedoms were protected. Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah questioned whether it was possible to measure to what extent a state can be deemed as prioritizing certain religions as superior to others. He suggested that lack of religious freedoms could lead to multiple problems. In the political sector, it could lead to the politicization of religions, while in the social sector it could lead to the construction of majority-minority discrimination. Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah argued that Islam did not teach its believers to regard themselves as different from its fellow citizens based on religion alone. He further argued that Islam embraced diversity and that God had purposely created humans to be different from one another.

Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah went on to provide some recommendations in order to improve social justice and the rule of law. First he called on improvements to



Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah
Former Deputy Minister of Higher Education, Malaysia

government regulations, both in terms of the laws as well as the constitutions. Second he called on the creation of a public space for diversity, enshrine by law if needed. We have to create public place of diversity, even if it requires law we need to make ones. Third he called on policies that met the people's need. Fourth he called for the creation of effective institutions to promote and protect human rights. Fifth he called on the harmonization of domestic laws with Islamic teaching. Sixth he encouraged Muslim countries to ratify international laws that could help improve its domestic regulations. Lastly he called on the provision of food education in order that future generations would have good morals.

Azyumardi Azra, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, Indonesia

The second to speak in Breakout Session 4 was Mr. Azyumardi Azra. He talked about how fortunate Indonesia and Malaysia are because in his view the two countries were not really troubled by social justice issues. To support this argument he pointed to the number of *Jamaah Hajj* pilgrims that Indonesia sent every year which he said was a large amount. Mr. Azyumardi Azra went on to explain that Indonesia did not see Islam as the state religion. Instead the constitution recognized six official religions and the state celebrated national holidays for special days of the six official religions. In this sense, Indonesia respected both Muslim and non-Muslims.

Mr. Azyumardi Azra went on to argue that Indonesia was not too focused on Islamic solidarity. For example, he pointed out that despite being the world's largest Muslim country, Indonesia's largest investment came from Malaysia, Japan, and the EU and not from the Muslim countries like Saudi Arabia. In this sense, he concluded that religion or Islam did not really affect social justice issues in Indonesia.

He went on to recall the days of the authoritarian Suharto era. He noted that there were a lot of intolerance but he felt that these were not always triggered by religion and



Azyumardi Azra
UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, Indonesia

instead were set off by political instability. Mr. Azyumardi Azra suggested that the current situation in Indonesia was fine as there was no discrimination between the majority and minority groups. It was further pointed out that if we compare Indonesia, where 8% of the population lived under the poverty line, it was not that much different to non-Muslim countries such as the Philippines.

Indonesia itself, he observed, had adopted a unique way to living with diverse cultures and religions. He called it as “Flowery Islam” which he felt was a distinctly Indonesian Islam culture. He acknowledged however, that in certain villages there were still some problems with intolerance, especially in areas where the *ulama* taught their congregations that non-Muslims should be viewed

as infidels or *kafir*. However, as a democratic country, Mr. Azyumardi Azra suggested there was little the government could do, which was why it was important that citizens should not misuse their freedoms. He ended by suggesting the government should consider operating a license system for the *ulama* so that they would not give careless/inflammatory statements.

Mohammad Reza Dehshiri, Deputy Dean, School of International Relations (Tehran, Iran) in Academic Cooperation

The last to speak was Mr. Mohammad Reza Dehshiri. In his presentation, Mr. Mohammad Reza Dehshiri talked about his perception about social justice and the current situation happening in Iran. According to him, social justice was conflictual in that it should be compatible in a social context. In this sense, he argued that it was important to talk about contextual Islam when we discussed social justice. In his view, social justice was a process that could not be achieved in a short time. It required raising public awareness, capacity building, and education. Mr. Mohammad Reza Dehshiri went on to say that one of the key pillars for social justice was to respect the dignity of humans at all levels of stakeholders. Other requirements included balancing society’s behavior in order to prevent extremism.

Mr. Mohammad Reza Dehshiri highlighted that in Iran, there were many Christians and Jews. He pointed out that the Iranian government treated all of them the same by protecting their rights to life, social security, education, political participation, marriage, divorce, etc. Noting that Iran’s population numbered 77 million people, it was pointed out that minority groups were allowed to enter Parliament. Indeed Mr. Mohammad Reza Dehshiri



Mohammad Reza Dehshiri
Deputy Dean, School of International Relations
(Tehran, Iran) in Academic Cooperation

explained that there were 5 members of parliament representing minority groups. Moreover minority groups received an annual budget for specific purposes such as repairing buildings, teaching them local languages, and providing them with religious programs.

Discussion

During the discussion that followed the presentations, the Breakout Session heard a number of comments and inputs from the other participants in attendance. Questions related to efforts at reducing poverty and injustice occurring in Muslim countries. It was also commented that Muslim countries should look towards the democratic system in order to prevent authoritarianism. In addition to this was the importance of achieving economic and social stability that were also in line with Islamic teaching.





Following the four Breakout Sessions, the Second International Conference of the World Forum for Muslim Democrats regrouped for a Closing Plenary. The Closing Plenary heard the moderators from each Breakout Session summarize the discussions held in their respective groups. Moderated by Bridget Welsh, Associate Fellow, The Habibie Center, Indonesia, the Closing Plenary also sought to explore ways forward, in particular the role of the media and other actors.

First to present was the moderator for Breakout Session 1, **Kilic Bugra Kanat**. He explained to the Closing Plenary that the discussion in Breakout Session 1 had mainly talked about understanding the rise of ISIS and how to handle the situation. It was explained that both the panelists and audience of Breakout Session 1 had agreed that the emergence of ISIS was due to the chaos witnessed in parts of the Middle East. Thus, ISIS was seen as the result of a regional problem. The problem in tackling ISIS was the fact that the terrorist group was very adaptable and could act like a regular army in some situations and a more non-traditional force in other situations. This made the situation more complex. To counter ISIS, it was suggested that the international community also needed a counter organization that was equally adaptable. As such, Kilic Bugra Kanat argued for a reevaluation of the hard power approach used to attack ISIS as it had proven ineffective thus far. He ended by saying the Breakout Session had concluded that in order to fight ISIS, it was important to stop the spread of radical ideas by ISIS in Iraq and Syria as well as to address Islamophobia in the Western world.

Second to present was the moderator for Breakout Session 2, **Thomas Vargas**. He explained that refugees and asylum seekers had been an important part of Islamic history, pointing to the *Hijrah* of Muslims from Mecca to Medina during the time of the Prophet Muhammad. Regarding the current situation, where almost 60 million people had fled their homes in search of safety, Mr. Thomas Vargas stated that the situation had become overwhelming. The situation had worsened as ISIS conducted terrorist attacks in Turkey, Yemen and France, having entered the countries disguised as refugees. Among the topics discussed in Breakout Session 2,

it was recalled that international help was very much needed to deal with the refugee issue. Thomas Vargas also explained to the Closing Plenary that the Breakout Session had called on Muslim countries to do more to ensure that Muslim refugees are protected. Thus to solve the issue, every regional body needed to recognize and address the issues raised. Another option that the Breakout Session had discussed was to adopt domestic legal frameworks dealing with refugees. The Breakout Session had concluded that if these options were not implemented, there was little chance for the flow of refugees to stop.

Third to present was the moderator for Breakout Session 3, **Shada Islam**. She explained to the Closing Plenary that she was not in favor of the term 'Islamophobia' as it implied a fear of extremists. Talking about fear, Shada Islam retold how the events of 9/11 had triggered a rise in hatred against Muslims. This had led to actions taken by many far-right organizations to press governments to stop receiving Muslim refugees. The Closing Plenary also heard how Breakout Session 3 had stressed the need for tolerance for Muslims but how this had been made difficult because of the numerous terrorist attacks launched in the name of Islam. The Closing Plenary also heard how the Breakout Session had called for greater inter-cultural discussion in face of the 21st century challenges.

The last to present was the moderator for Breakout Session 4, **Endy M. Bayuni**. The Closing Plenary were informed that the main discussion of the Breakout Session was about resolving the poverty and injustice seen in Muslim countries. This was apparent because of the low ranking of Muslim countries in various GDP and rule of law indexes. The Breakout Session also discussed how this was against Islamic teaching. In order to resolve this, the Breakout Session had proposed Muslim countries to look for democracy and to repeal authoritarian laws. Furthermore, the Closing Plenary heard how Breakout Session 4 had suggested that Muslim countries should have credible law enforcement in order to achieve prosperity and justice which led to greater economic and social stability, in accordance with Islamic teachings.



Day 2 of the Second International Conference of the World Forum for Muslim Democrats featured a High Level Plenary that featured as keynote speakers HE Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, former Secretary-General of the ASEAN Secretariat and YAB Mohamed Azmin Ali, Chief Minister of Selangor, Malaysia. The High Level Plenary also featured Ms. Rahimah Abdulrahim, Executive Director, The Habibie Center, Indonesia who gave an Opening Remarks and Prof. Dr. Bridget Welsh, Associate Fellow, The Habibie Center, Indonesia who gave a Summary of Day 1 proceedings. The High Level Plenary concluded with the declaration of the Statement of the Second International Conference of the World Forum for Muslim Democrats.

In her Opening Remarks, **Ms. Rahimah Abdulrahim** expressed her appreciation to the great speakers and audiences that had participated in the conference over the past few days. She went on to express her anticipation for the Third International Conference of the World Forum for Muslim Democrats that would be held sometime next year.

Next on stage was **Prof. Bridget Welsh** who provided a recap and summary of the previous day's discussions. She recalled the discussion from Breakout Session 1 which had touched on the ISIS issue, detailing the history of the problem and how the international community had failed to address the issue. Thus, a new strategy was needed to tackle the issue and to find solutions that did not look at the problem from a military/ security perspective. Meanwhile the discussion from Breakout Session 2 had focused on the Syrian and Rohingya refugees. It was highlighted how recent terrorist attacks had been blamed on actors that had entered Europe on the pretence of being refugees, and how this had turned some Europeans against Muslim refugees. In this sense it was important to differentiate between genuine

refugees and terrorists. Breakout Session 2 had also discussed how it was important to ensure that people of all religions and skin color were recognized as belonging to humanity, so as to prevent discrimination against refugees. In Breakout Session 3, which had discussed Islamophobia and minorities, Bridget Welsh explained that we had learned it was important to reduce and erase stereotypes of Islam. Last but not least in Breakout Session 4, which had discussed Social Justice and the Rule of Law, she highlighted how we had to change our framework in economy in order to uphold social justice in society.

The third to speak at the High Level Plenary was **H.E. Dr Surin Pitsuwan**. In his keynote speech, H.E. Dr Surin Pitsuwan thanked the Sasakawa Peace Foundation and the other co-organizers for their support, generosity, and advice in giving Muslims a stage to correct the many misunderstandings and misperceptions about Islam. H.E. Dr Surin Pitsuwan noted that Muslims were regularly blamed for many of the world's problems. This was unfortunate as the recent spate of terrorist attacks were carried out by those who were misguided by an extremely false understanding of the *Qur'an*.

H.E. Dr Surin Pitsuwan went on to recall how under the symbol of Islam, a great expanse of civilizations had been achieved from Medina, Damascus, Baghdad, Northern Africa all the way to India. Furthermore, Islam had contributed to the enlightened reformation as well as the industrial revolution that took place in Europe, which had unfortunately triggered a power struggle for land, resources, and markets. As such, Muslims had become victims of Western colonization. Despite this, H.E. Dr Surin Pitsuwan said Muslims should not keep blaming others for their own suffering. Muslims needed their own enlightenment and should come together to analyze its current situation. In his view, it was better late than never.



H.E. Dr Surin Pitsuwan went on to express his hope that the World Forum for Muslim Democrats could come up with solutions to such problems. He recommended that Muslims must first start by choosing good governments that were transparent, accountable and effective. He also recommended improving education for Muslims. In his view, if we talk about Muslim Democrats, we also needed to talk about Muslim education, because as the world moves forward, Muslims were increasingly turning their back on the globalized world and shunning technological advances.

H.E. Dr Surin Pitsuwan called on Muslims to be critical and constantly pose questions. When we pursue knowledge, it was important for Muslims to embrace diversity. In his view, the tendency of Muslims to not tolerate diversity was against Islamic teachings. He went on to state the democracy involved compromises. It was wrong to believe we were correct all the time and in this sense it was important to be aware that our judgments could sometimes be right and could also be wrong. As such we should be willing to hear alternative views and opinions. Only through recognizing our strengths and weaknesses would Muslims be able to survive. Otherwise they will forever be blamed for the world's problem and be victims of it. Moreover, Muslims would be left behind and the future would not belong to them. To end H.E. Dr Surin Pitsuwan stated, "Inspired by humanity, Muslim democrats must stand up."

The last to speak was **YAB Mohamed Azmin Ali**. In his keynote speck he highlighted a motto from notable Indonesian national heroine for advancing women's rights, R.A. Kartini: "*Habis gelap, terbitlah terang*" ("After darkness, light is born"). In his view, a number of Muslim countries had fallen into darkness, becoming failed states and wrecked by civil wars. He believed that Muslim countries would one day rise again and highlighted Indonesia as a success story that the Muslim world could learn from on how to become a democratic Muslim country. YAB Mohamed Azmin Ali called on Muslim countries to come together to actively promote an

Islam democratic agenda. Indeed, he argued that acts of violence should not be related to Islamic civilization and called for an end to notions of a war of civilizations. With regards to terrorists, he called for the perpetrators to be punished according to the law.

YAB Mohamed Azmin Ali went on to say that the world had seen numerous acts of injustice against minority groups. This was true not only for Muslim minorities in non-Muslim countries but also for minority groups in the Muslim world. For example, he highlighted conflicts between Sunni and Shia Muslims in the Middle East. As such he called for an end to the culture of intolerance and hatred. Aside from the discussion on extremism, YAB Mohamed Azmin Ali argued that Muslims needed to fix their health and education systems, and to address the growing gap between the rich and the poor. This was seen as particularly important as 50% of the world's poorest countries were from the Muslim world. Noting the changes taking place in Indonesia, YAB Mohamed Azmin Ali said more was needed to fix the government institutions so that they are more transparent and give spaces to minority groups to express their views. Turning his attention to other Muslim countries, YAB Mohamed Azmin Ali said they must also act as examples of successful democratic states. He ended by saying one of the important lessons from the World Forum for Muslim Democrats was the need to appreciate our differences. YAB Mohamed Azmin Ali argued that our differences should be what unites us to make the world a better place, and to uphold justice in a time of much inequality.

Following the keynote speeches from HE Dr. Surin Pitsuwan and YAB Mohamed Azmin Ali, the High Level Plenary heard a number of questions from the audience in a Q and A session moderated by Ms. Rahimah Abdulrahim. After the Q and A session, the four co-organizers of the Second International Conference of the World Forum for Muslim Democrats came together on the stage to announce the Statement of the Second International Conference of the World Forum for Muslim Democrats.

STATEMENT

Second International Conference World Forum for Muslim Democrats 23-24 November, 2015, Jakarta, Indonesia



The Second International Conference of the World Forum for Muslim Democrats was held in Jakarta, Indonesia from 23-24 November 2015. The conference gathered Muslim leaders and prominent democrats in Asia, the Middle East, Turkey, and Europe to establish a platform for intellectual discussions on the promotion and strengthening of democracy and democratic movements in the Muslim world and to generate a conversation over these topics between the Muslim and non-Muslim worlds.

This platform is a bold initiative that unequivocally and unabatedly seeks to determine the narrative that freedom, justice, democracy and the rule of law are rightfully the Muslim agenda. It seeks to reemphasize the true, peaceful and pluralistic nature of Islam as well as strives for an Islamic resurgence that ensures the rule of law, good governance, social justice and cultural empowerment where there is no gender, ethnic or religious discrimination. It also aims to demonstrate possible contributions of Muslim Democrats to the debate on theory and practice of democracy throughout the world.

At the very outset, the participants of the Second International Conference of the World Forum for Muslim Democrats,

Express its deepest condolences to the victims of the recent terrorist attacks that took place in France, Lebanon, Egypt, Nigeria, Turkey, Mali and Cameroon. Our thoughts and prayers go to the families and loved ones they leave behind;

Condemn in the strongest terms possible the aforementioned terrorist attacks which have no place in Islam and do not and should not represent the more than one billion Muslims across the world that subscribe to peace, compassion and humanity.

Further, the participants of the Second International Conference of the World Forum for Muslim Democrats,

Recalling the achievements made in the First International Conference of the World Forum for Muslim Democrats and the related Final Statement issued at that same conference to establish a common platform for leaders, intellectuals, and professionals of the Islamic faith, together with their associates from other faiths and persuasions;

Reaffirming Islam's innate quality as a universal religion with its flexibility and capacity to adapt to new political, social and economic environments;

Reaffirming the significance of gender rights in Islam;

Recognizing the significant role of Indonesia as the world's most populous Muslim nation and third largest democracy in promoting the values of moderation, tolerance, understanding and inclusivism;

Alarmed by rising extremism, extremist violence and terrorism in the Middle East, Afghanistan, Pakistan and other parts of the world;

Noting with deep concern the threat posed by the continuous and expanding terrorism activities carried out by *Daesh*/ISIS/ISIL (and groups/individuals inspired by them) in the Middle East, North African countries and Europe to peace and security;

Noting with deep concern the rise of marginalization, alienation and social injustice against minority Muslims in both the non-Muslim world and the Muslim world;

We, the participants of the Second International Conference of the World Forum for Muslim Democrats therefore,

State the urgent need to moderate and ameliorate the voices of intolerance, extremism and exclusivism with the strengthened voices of moderation, tolerance, understanding and inclusivism;

Condemn the persistence of ethnic and religious persecutions in different parts of the world;

Call upon the Muslim world to actively engage in global efforts to ameliorate the problems of refugees and internally displaced persons and to enhance their welfare and protect their human dignity;

Call upon the Muslim world to continue and enhance networks and channels of communication in sharing best practices and experiences in moderating and challenging the voices of intolerance, extremism and exclusivism with the voices of moderation, tolerance, understanding and inclusivism.

Call upon the Muslim world to embark upon a coordinated and sustainable effort to achieve social justice through improving the quality of governance, developing solutions against poverty and ensuring the protection of human rights for all, including for ethnic and religious minorities within and across countries;

Express its appreciation for the achievement Indonesia has made in exposing the compatibility of freedom and democracy with Islam;

On that basis, we, the participants of the Second International Conference of the World Forum for Muslim Democrats resolve to hold the third International Conference and expand the participation of countries from Europe, Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

In addition, we stress our commitment, individually and collectively to undertake the following action:

1. Education

To undertake education program/activities that target youths in the Muslim world to foster a new generation of Muslim Democrats;

2. Social Justice, Rule of Law and Economic Aspects

To pursue social justice and rule of law by calling on governments in the Muslim world to fulfil the Islamic imperatives to provide among other things better health care, education, housing and employment in the spirit of Muslim Democrats;

3. Public Outreach

To enhance media literacy and engage the media in undertaking a conversation for widening and deepening

the people's understanding of the common views of Muslim Democrats within and outside the Muslim world in order to reduce tensions between the Muslim and non-Muslim world;

4. Annual Reports

To publish a series of thematic annual reports for encouraging dialogues to promote Muslim Democrats.

The participating institutions have decided to establish a network of offices to undertake the above action plans.

Jakarta, 24 November, 2015

- **Organizing Committee of the Second World Forum of Muslim Democrats**
- **The Habibie Center, Indonesia**
- **Institute for Policy Research, Malaysia**
- **SETA, Turkey**
- **Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Japan**



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