Majlis Perundingan Malaysia Agama Buddha, Kristian, Hindu, Sikh dan Tao

Malaysian Consultative Council of Buddhism Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism and Taoism

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MERDEKA 2026: MALAYSIA MUST REJECT POLITICS OF HATRED AND RETURN TO THE TRUE SPIRIT OF NATION BUILDING

While we prepare to celebrate the 69th Hari Merdeka, the Malaysian Consultative Council of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism and Taoism (MCCBCHST) calls upon every Malaysian to reflect honestly on whether we are truly living the values that Merdeka represents. The freedom we achieved was never intended to become a license to divide us.

Yet, in recent times, particularly during the recently concluded Johor and Negeri Sembilan state elections, we witnessed an alarming escalation of political rhetoric that openly appealed to voters to vote along racial and religious lines. Such narratives seek to persuade us that fellow citizens should be feared rather than embraced as partners in building our nation. This is a dangerous path!

Equally disturbing is the increasing normalization of bigotry and hate speech. It is deeply saddening that Malaysians continue to be confronted with inflammatory narratives suggesting that non-Malays or non-Muslims are intent on undermining Islam. Such sweeping accusations are irresponsible, deeply offensive and entirely contrary to the spirit of nation building. They foster fear, suspicion and hostility between communities that have lived alongside one another for generations. The overwhelming majority of Malaysians, regardless of race or religion, simply wish to live in peace, raise their families, practice their respective faiths and contribute positively to the nation's progress.

Political or ideological differences must never be exploited to portray entire communities as threats to one another. Individuals who make inflammatory and derogatory remarks against other races and religions appear able to do so with little consequence, encouraging others to push the boundaries of acceptable public discourse. Every unchecked act of hatred chips away at the foundations of our national unity.

No Malaysian should ever be made to feel like an enemy simply because of his or her race or religion. Likewise, no religion should be weaponized for political gain or used to cast suspicion upon fellow citizens. Such tactics undermine both national unity and the integrity of religion itself.

Instead of uniting Malaysians to confront the real challenges facing our nation, too much of our national discussion is consumed by manufactured controversies over race and religion. Precious time and energy are diverted away from combating corruption, strengthening institutions, improving education, creating quality jobs, enhancing healthcare, addressing the rising cost of living, and ensuring that every Malaysian has the opportunity to succeed.

Politics built upon slander, fear and suspicion can never produce a confident nation. It may deliver short-term political gains, but it imposes long-term costs on society by eroding trust and weakening social cohesion. This is definitely not the Malaysia envisioned by our forefathers.

The spirit of Merdeka is not merely about commemorating independence from colonial rule. It is about building a nation where diversity is a strength, where every citizen enjoys equal dignity under the Federal Constitution, and where disagreements are resolved through dialogue.

Malaysia's strength has never been built upon assimilation, where communities are expected to surrender their identities, cultures or beliefs. Rather, our success has always rested on integration where Malaysians of different races, religions and cultures remain proud of their respective identities while coming together under a shared commitment to the Federal Constitution, the Rukun Negara and the common good. Integration strengthens society by fostering mutual respect, trust and cooperation, allowing our diversity to become a national asset rather than a source of division. This is the nation-building model that has served Malaysia for generations and must continue to guide us into the future.

If we continue down the path of racial and religious polarization, Malaysia risks falling behind nations that have chosen unity, innovation and good governance over perpetual division. No country can achieve sustainable economic growth or social progress if its people are constantly encouraged to distrust one another. National unity is the very foundation for development.

The MCCBCHST therefore calls upon:

1. All political leaders to reject campaigns that exploit race and religion, and instead compete on ideas, integrity, competence and policies that improve the lives of all Malaysians.

2. Law enforcement authorities to act firmly and impartially against any individual who incites hatred or hostility, regardless of status, political affiliation or influence.

3. Religious leaders to promote compassion, mutual respect and understanding, recognizing that every faith teaches the values of justice, peace and human dignity.

4. Every Malaysian to reject fear, misinformation and slander, and refuse to become instruments of division.

The Federal Constitution remains our common pledge. It protects the rights and freedoms of every Malaysian while providing the framework for our diverse society to flourish together. We must defend this shared foundation with wisdom, courage and restraint.

As we celebrate 69 years of independence, let us remember that Merdeka is not merely an event from our past but a responsibility entrusted to every generation.

The true test of our patriotism is not how loudly we proclaim our love for Malaysia, but how faithfully we protect the unity, harmony and mutual respect that have sustained our nation for decades.

Let this Merdeka be remembered as the moment we chose nation over division, truth over slander, hope over fear, and unity over hatred.

SELAMAT HARI MERDEKA MALAYSIA

-ENDS-

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