

THE PASSING OF A RELIGIOUS SCHOLAR

Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura and the Singapore Muslim community are deeply saddened by the passing of a senior and well respected 'Alim (religious scholar), Ustaz Ahmad Sonhadji Mohamed this morning at the National University Hospital at age 88. His demise is without doubt a great loss to us all as we reflect on his contributions to Muis, the community, nation and beyond.

2. Funeral prayer for the late Ustaz Ahmad Sonhadji was led by Mufti Syed Isa Semait, immediately after Asr (late afternoon) prayer at Muhajirin Mosque at the Singapore Islamic Hub.

3. Ustaz Ahmad Sonhadji was well-known among the Muslim community here as an advisor and a source of reference on Islamic religious matters. He was active in the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (Muis) serving as council member of Muis for many years, and contributed in various workgroups constituted under Muis to deal with the community's religious issues.

4. One of his key contributions was through the Fatwa Committee, of which he had been a member since 1975. He had always been a progressive and forward looking scholar, and his ideas and thoughts were pivotal in advancing many issues deliberated by the Fatwa Committee such as waqaf development, zakat administration, determination of the beginning of the Islamic calendar through mathematical calculations and deliberations on NEWater. Among his contributions were his key insights into organ donation and the inclusion of Muslims under the Human Organ Transplant Act (Hota). He was also a resource person for the Religious Rehabilitation Group(RRG).

5. For his significant contributions to Muis and the community, he was awarded Muis highest award, Pingat Jasa Cemerlang in 1992. He was also awarded Muis' 40th Anniversary Award last year.

6. Educated at Singapore's Madrasah Aljunied from 1937 to 1944 which straddled the period of Japanese Occupation, Ustaz Ahmad Sonhadji had authored many books and his best-known monumental work is the translation and interpretation of the Qur'an into the Malay language. It took him more than 25 years to complete this task and it has subsequently been reprinted many times.

7. His instructional book on performing the prayer has also been reprinted many times and is used by the majority of Muslims in Singapore. It has also been translated into other languages such as Korean and Sinhalese.

8. The Ustaz Ahmad Sonhadji Mohamed Collection at Singapore's National Library comprises more than 1,000 publications in Jawi, Arabic and Malay, on Islam and the development of Islam in Singapore and Southeast Asia, and more than 500 manuscripts which are on loan. The manuscripts include notes of his sermons and

interpretation of the Qur'an for which he is most respected for in the region of Southeast Asia.

9. His love for knowledge and the dissemination of knowledge were so great that he was still teaching at Muhajirin Mosque, even in his 80s. He was also one of the pioneers of Pergas, the Association of Islamic Scholars and Religious Teachers of Singapore, where he was appointed as its Vice Chairperson and subsequently as advisor. While In Pergas, he has shown a keen interest in the development of the asatizah (religious teachers).

10. Many of his students have become important and respected religious leaders of the Muslim community in Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei. They include Singapore's Mufti, Syed Isa Semait and Negara Brunei Darussalam's former Minister of Religious Affairs, Pehin Haji Mohd Zain Haji Serudin.

11. With his passing, the community has lost one of the most revered and learned religious leader who was ahead of his time in his religious thinking. He was passionate and has touched the lives of many Muslims here.

12. May Allah swt showers his choicest blessings for all his great deeds and contributions to the well being of the community.

13. Muis would like to express our condolences to members of his family.

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