



MEDIA STATEMENT 29 September 2017

MUIS' STATEMENT ON MUFTI'S FRIDAY SERMON

1. Mufti Dr Mohamed Fatris Bakaram, in his Friday Sermon, called on the Muslim community to be wary of messages which misquote verses from the Quran as well as prophetic sayings and traditions in an effort to justify acts of violence. In particular he cited the example of a recent video (produced by ISIS and featuring Singaporean Megat Shahdan), and pointed out several false messages in the video, designed to mislead and influence viewers, which are gross distortions of Islam.
2. Expanding on the examples cited by Mufti in the sermon, the Office of the Mufti would like to highlight several problematic aspects of the video.
3. Throughout the video, Megat Shahdan and ISIS irresponsibly distort hadith (prophetic traditions and sayings) and excerpts from the Quran to justify ISIS' dangerous agenda of violence and atrocities. For example, Megat Shahdan refers to the hadith "practising religion is like grasping on to coals", which seeks to remind Muslims to persevere and remain resilient in upholding their faith. Instead of this meaning however, he spuriously implies that as we approach the end of times, violence is justified as Muslims are surrounded by "evil", are in a "constant state of oppression", and face constraints in the practice of their religion. **It is obvious that Megat Shahdan is parroting ISIS' propaganda to mislead Muslims on the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad.**
4. To reinforce this misguided ideology, Megat Shahdan also tried to misrepresent a claim– that Muslims would be guaranteed one of two great outcomes, victory or martyrdom – as having roots from the Quran, when this is not true. His sole intention was to encourage and justify violence against non-Muslims, even when Muslims live in peace and harmony with them. This goes strongly **against the Quranic principle of reciprocating peace and harmony with the same**, for example in Qur'an chapter 8 verse 61: *"And if they incline to peace, then incline to it also and rely upon Allah."*
5. Megat Shahdan further espoused violence by invoking uncontextualised examples of all the prophets, which is completely erroneous. The main mission of Prophet Muhammad was to spread compassion and mercy (Quran chapter 21 verse 102). In fact, the Prophet established **the mission of Islam, that it, to "spread peace, and give food, and pray at night when others are asleep and you shall enter Heaven in peace"**, in one of his earliest statements upon reaching the city of Madinah. What Megat Shahdan has done is therefore blasphemous and unIslamic, as it taints and distorts the intentions of our prophets to suit ISIS' violent narratives.

6. Megat Shahdan also attempted to popularise the insidious ISIS doctrine of *hijrah* or migration to encourage Muslims to migrate to “Islamic” lands/territories. However, credible Muslim scholars worldwide have always maintained that **Muslims should continue to be contributing citizens and co-exist harmoniously with other communities** in diverse, multi-religious societies. Scholars, both in the classical and contemporary periods, such as al-Mawardi and Sheikh Abdullah bin Bayyah, have expressed their views that there is no need for Muslims to migrate if they can practise the religion wherever they live. Indeed, the Prophet instructed a companion by the name of Fudayk to continue staying with his tribe where a majority of them were non-Muslims, but where he was still able to practise his religious rituals in peace. This is similar to the situation in Singapore, where we are privileged to even have the Administration of Muslim Law Act (AMLA) to help guide, support, and facilitate our religious life.

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