

# Islamic Awakening and Its Role in Islamic Solidarity in Malaysia

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## Abstract

The Islamic Awakening in Malaysia has brought about the consciousness of adopting and practicing the Islamic way of life. The process of implementing the principles of Islam is based on a gradual evolutionary process, rather than a drastic approach. Therefore, the selective implementation of Islamic law has been carried out relatively smoothly. For that reason, various institutions have been established – such as, Islamic universities, Islamic banking and insurance companies, and other Islamic organizations and institutions. The case studies in this article related to Malaysia are: The Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS), Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia – ABIM (Malaysian Islamic Youth Movement), and some Islamic institutions, which play important roles in the Islamic Awakening and solidarity in Malaysia. The PAS and ABIM are the prominent Islamic parties and movements, respectively, which can be regarded as the driving force behind the Islamic Awakening in Malaysia. Based on a tri-dimensional perspective – that is, socioeconomic well-being and the strength of the expansion of Islamic education, and political stability – this study highlights the accomplishment of Islamic Awakening in Malaysia.

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## Introduction

This paper explores the role of Islamic Awakening for the establishment and expansion of Islamic solidarity in Malaysia. Islamic Awakening (or revivalism)<sup>1</sup> refers to a comprehensive reconstruction of society and an increase of Islamic awareness among the Muslim masses, leading to individual piety – as well as intellectual, cultural, political, and socioeconomic reforms that are guided by the Qur’ān and the Ḥadīth. In the Malaysian context, Islamic awakening means bringing structural changes to social institutions and practices among Malaysian Muslims so that they can become more observant of the essence of Islamic faith and teachings as the way of life. Islamic solidarity, on the other hand, indicates that Muslims, despite their diversity, are united by virtue of their collective adherence to the principles of Islam. The Islamic understanding of solidarity is in the pursuit of cohesion – increasing interaction, and unity in a society that can provide grounds for enhancing the *Ummah*, the global community of the faithful. Islamic solidarity can take several forms – such as social (the welfare of society), financial (giving *zakāt*, “obligatory almsgiving,” and *ṣadaqah*, “voluntary almsgiving”), and political (the implementation of the Sharī‘ah laws, both technological and moral).

Based on a tri-dimensional perspective – that is, for socioeconomic well-being, the strength for the expansion of Islamic education, and political stability<sup>2</sup> – this study highlights the accomplishment of Islamic Awakening in Malaysia. In Malaysia, Islamic Awakening started to emerge by means of Malay and Islamic political parties and Islamic organizations. Some of the Malay political parties and organizations are: Kesatuan Melayu Muda (the Young Malay Union), which was established in 1937; the Parti Kebangsaan Melayu (the Malay Nationalist Party), which was formed in 1945; the *Hisb al-Muslimīn* (the Muslim Party), which was formed in 1948; the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), which was formed in 1949; and the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS), which was formed in 1951. However, PAS and UMNO are the only Malay political parties that are still in operation. Some of the Islamic organizations influential after the independence of Malaysia are Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia – ABIM (Malaysian Islamic Youth Movement), which was formed in 1972; Jamaah Islah Malaysia (JIM), which was formed in 1990, and many other Islamic Institutions, such as Pertubuhan Kebajikan Islam Malaysia – PERKIM (Muslim Welfare Organisation), which was formed in 1964, and Institut Kefahaman Islam Malaysia – IKIM (Institute of Islamic Understanding Malaysia), which was formed in 1992.

Considering the fact that Malaysian society is multicultural in nature, the process of implementing the principles of Islam was based on a gradual evolutionary process, rather than a drastic one. Islamic Awakening in Malaysia started with increasing the awareness of Muslim Malays in practicing Islam as a way of life, rather than merely viewing Islam as a bundle of rituals. At the same time, the interests of the non-Muslim citizens needed to be considered to attain sociopolitical harmony. However, as the majority of the population of Malaysia is Muslim, their endeavor to create a distinct Islamic identity was discernible. Therefore, various institutions have been established – such as, Islamic universities, Islamic banking and insurance, and other Islamic organizations and institutions.

### **Islamic Awakening in Malaysia**

It is essential to outline a brief background of the pre-independence era of Malaysia in the British colonized Malaysian peninsula. During this British colonization (1874 to the middle of 1957), the British controlled almost everything – capturing the political and economic power, and exploiting the sociocultural values. The British, however, understood the religious and cultural sensitivity of Muslims in Malaysia. They let the kings exercise their minimal powers in their own domain. Since the Malays were loyal to their kings, they followed whatever their kings asked them to do. The Malay kings kept the Islamic practice intact, and tried to ensure that Islamic principles are being carried out. Therefore, the British allowed Islamic law to be practiced personally. The kings, however, could not influence the political domain and, therefore, were unable to do anything that contradicted the British policy. In any case, the Muslim Malays were not free to propagate an Islamic political system. The colonizers controlled the activities of their Islamic critics by barring them from preaching in the mosques or publishing articles about Islam, except when it related to personal law.<sup>3</sup>

In contemporary Malaysia, Islam is the official state religion – although Article 11 of the Malaysian Constitution guarantees freedom of religious worship. All Malays are Muslims by birth. Most of the Chinese in Malaysia are Buddhists and Taoists, but there is a growing number of Christians among the Chinese and only a minority of Muslims. Among the Indians, most are Hindus – with a small number of Christians, Muslims, and Sikhs. Minority ethnic groups, such as the Portuguese Eurasians and Europeans are mainly Christians. The aborigines (*orang asli*) are either animists, Christians, or Muslims.<sup>4</sup> The decentralized nature of religious organization in Malaysia allows a certain degree of flexibility in religious activities, although activities in the Islamic field are mutually exclusive of those in the non-Islamic field.<sup>5</sup>

However, the Malays being Muslims were always concerned about their adherence to Islamic solidarity. They were concerned about the alternative ways for Islamic Awakening in Malaya. In their ideological enclaves in Singapore and Penang (Malaysia), the individuals who comply with Sharī‘ah (Islamic law) thrived and promoted the vision of their creed in relative freedom.<sup>6</sup> A group of Muslims started publishing the journal *Al-Imam* in 1906. The journal held the view that it was only through “knowledge of the commands of our religion . . . that the ills of the Muslim community might be cured”.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, their strategies included the spread of Islamic knowledge among people through mass education. *Al-Imam* published articles criticizing Malays for abiding to the pre-Islamic customs and their failure to follow Islamic rulings. In the last decade of British occupation, the Sharī‘ah-compliance people in the society insisted that the state should operate based on Islamic principles.<sup>8</sup>

### **Political Activism in Pre-independent Malaysia**

The rise of Malay and Islamic political parties during pre-independent Malaya was apparent when in 1937 the first Malay political party, the Kesatuan Melayu Muda – KMM (the Young Malay Union), was formed in Kuala Lumpur by Ibrahim Haji Yakub and his colleagues. Haji Ibrahim was the first leader of the KMM. The party was led by the Malays who had a secular educational background – even though, a large number of those who were educated in an Islamic environment played important roles, particularly at the grassroot level. The party initially recruited students from Islamic educational institutions for political purposes.<sup>9</sup> When Malaya was occupied by Japan from 1941 to 1945, the party was banned by the Japanese in June 1942. After Japan was defeated, the *Parti Kebangsaan Melayu – PKM* (the Malay National Party) was established in Ipoh Perak in October 1945. It was consecutively led by Mukhtaruddin Lasso, Dr. Burhanuddin Hilmi, and Ishaq Haji Muhammad. The PKM was regarded as leftist Malay political party, and therefore to regain its image, it later formed several satellite political organizations – such as the *Angkatan Pemuda Insaf – API* (the Conscious Youth Movement), the *Angkatan Wanita Sedar – AWAS* (the Conscious Women Movement), and the *Barisan Tani SeMalaya – BATAS* (the Pan-Malaya Peasant Front).<sup>10</sup>

Another leftist Malay political party (known as the first Islamic party) was *Hisb al-Muslimīn – HM* (the Muslim Party) formed on March 14, 1948.<sup>11</sup> This party was led by Ustaz Abu Bakr al-Baqir, a principal of an Islamic school, al-Ihya’al-Sharif, Gunung Semanggol, Perak, Haji Arifin

from Johore, and Mahmud Daud Jamil from Kelantan. The objective of the party was to attain independence from the British for the sovereign Malay nation, and to establish an Islamic society and state (Dar al-Islam) in Malaya. The party formed religious, educational, political, economic, social, youth, and women departments.<sup>12</sup>

The PKM and the HM received some support from groups advocating Indonesian nationalism – especially when they adopted the “red and white” as their symbol – but the HM differed from other political parties in its commitment to Islam. The HM was influenced by the biggest, but now defunct, Indonesian Islamic Party, which was well known as Mashumi.<sup>13</sup> The party also tried to recruit members from the PKM who were interested in religion, and isolated those they perceived to be weak to remain as PKM members.<sup>14</sup> The political activities around Gunong Semanggol were isolated from members of the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), which was officially established on May 14, 1946. The UMNO was led by Datok Onn. The PKM’s “Greater Indonesia” (Indonesia Raya), a concept of a union of Malaya with Indonesia under the banner of “red and white,” but was opposed by Datok Onn and other members of UMNO.<sup>15</sup>

The influence of Indonesian political ideologies of the PKM was openly observed after World War II spread across Southeast Asia from 1942 to 1945. In July 1945, at the end of the Japanese occupation on Malaya, prominent leaders such as Ibrahim Yaakob, Onan Siradj and few others established the Kesatuan Rakyat Indonesia Semenanjung – KRIS (Peninsular Indonesian National Union). Its establishment was supported by the Japanese, and its purpose was to strive for the independence of Malaya and Indonesia. The merger of Malaya and Indonesia was named the Indonesia Raya. or the Greater Indonesia. Prominent personalities of Malaya had discussions with prominent leaders of Indonesia (Soekarno and Hatta).<sup>16</sup> The most important agenda in KRIS was the meeting of leaders from both parties. One of the representatives from peninsular Malaya was Dr. Burhanuddin Helmi, and prominent representatives from Indonesia were Soekarno and Hatta. This meeting was held in August 1945 in Malaya. The agreement was that the independence of Malaya would be announced in Greater Indonesia. However, this agreement failed because Japan surrendered and the British colonized Malaya again.<sup>17</sup>

The initiative of the PKM to establish Greater Indonesia failed to influence the majority of the masses because they, the sultans (kings), and their religious functionaries supported UMNO instead of PKM. In addition, the UMNO was more acceptable to the British government. After undergoing a long process of negotiations and deliberation between the UMNO, kings,

and the British government, the Federation of Malaya was founded on February 1, 1948, replacing the Malayan Union.<sup>18</sup>

Since Islamic consciousness has always been vibrant among the Malays, they always looked for an independent practice and preaching of Islamic principles. After the independence of Malaysia on August 31, 1957, the Malays got the opportunity for realizing their aspirations. The Sharī'ah-conscious people tried to get rid of the power of kings, their religious authority – and safeguarding Islam from their sole dominance by establishing a pan Malayan religious council.<sup>19</sup> The political parties had to consider the sensitivity of common people because they were able to influence the leaders to adhere to Islamic rulings. In addition, the political parties also tried to reduce the power of the king.

In Malaysia, modernization is principally a product of British colonialism. On the one hand, an uncompromising this-worldliness ushered in by the industrial ethos has subordinated spiritual faith to the iron cage of rational management. On the other hand, the need for religious fulfillment has increased the search for more meaningful worship.<sup>20</sup> Malay political leaders have emphasized to the Muslim public that Islam is not against worldly success – suggesting the futility of joining new religious movements that stress other-worldly values to the detriment of material benefits. The establishment of Muslim banks, an Islamic university, welfare organizations, and missionary bodies has contributed to the image of Islamic progressiveness through government sponsorship.<sup>21</sup>

Between the 1960s and the 1980s, Malaysia experienced a drastic change in its sociocultural structure. The situation of the Sharī'ah-compliant people has been significantly strengthened.<sup>22</sup> Gradually, Islamic Awakening made its way to persuade the common people as well as the leaders of the country toward realizing the vision of Islam. A rapid cultural transformation occurred in all aspects of the life of the Malays, who are constitutionally defined as Muslims. The most visible changes occurred in terms of the pattern of dressing and verbal interaction – and the emergence of Islamic educational and financial institutions. The Malay females during the 1960s and early 1970s increasingly adopted the observance of Islamic dress-code (covering their *awrah* – the whole body except part of the face, wrist, and feet). The free intermingling between the opposite sexes was also minimized. In their daily social interaction, people started to use Arabic vocabulary more than they did in the past. The Islamic greeting of “*as-salamu alaikum*” (peace be upon you)” was a commonly used term when people met each other.

The New Economic Policies (NEP) of Malaysia also provided an environment in which an increasing number of young Malay intellectuals also

found much solace and contentment in Islam.<sup>23</sup> Syed M. Naquib Al-Attas states that Islam marked a crucial stage in the modernization of Malaysia, and maintains that it was Islam that provided novel and positive universal values to the Malays.<sup>24</sup> The unique norms and values in Malay culture, known as *adat* (customary law) are very much in line with the teachings of Islam. That Islam is an integral and significant factor in Malay culture today is beyond dispute, and Islam has become part and parcel of the Malay worldview, and has served to integrate the Malays.<sup>25</sup> In addition, Islam provides the institutions for communication and socialization, and it generates a sense of solidarity and togetherness among the Malays – for example, in the activities organized in mosques.<sup>26</sup>

As mentioned before, Islamic Awakening in Malaysia started to emerge by the end of 1930s with the Islamization process, which was partially influenced by the ideologies of thinkers from Egypt, South Asia, and Indonesia. Some of the prominent Egyptian thinkers who influenced the movements in Malaysia are Muḥammad ‘Abduh, Jamal al-din-al-Afghānī, Rashid Riḍā, Ḥasan al-Bannā, and Sayyid Quṭb. The writings of popular intellectuals from South Asia, including Sayyid Abul Ala Maududi, were one of the important sources of reading for members of some of the Islamic movements in Malaysia. The writings and ideas of Indonesian thinkers, politicians, and Islamic scholars – like Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah known as Hamka, Muhammad Hatta, and Muhammad Natsir – are very influential among Malaysian Islamic movements and Islamic political parties. For instance, Burhanuddin Helmi, the president of the PAS in 1956, received education from Indonesian, Indian, and Egyptian Islamic scholars. Finally, the ideas of Ismail Raji al-Faruqi (1921–1986), a renowned Palestinian-American philosopher and Islamic scholar, gave a significant impetus for Islamization in Malaysia.

In this process, taking Islam as a worldview and a comprehensive code of life, several Islamic institutions have been established. Malaysia being a multicultural society has to consider the rights and necessities of the Chinese, Indian, and indigenous population, the majority of whom are non-Muslims. Thus, the challenge of Islamic revivalism and awakening is enormous in the Malaysian sociopolitical environment.

In Malaysia as in the other Muslim countries, Islamic organizations have been formed with the aim of establishing an Islamic state – the Islamic Party of Malaysia (PAS) and the Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia (ABIM) are the influential organizations in Malaysia. However, PAS is the only Islamic organization that is directly involved in the Malaysian political arena. Many Muslim organizations have contributed to Islamic Awak-

ening in Malaysia. The Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia (known as ABIM) was established in July 1971 by former members of Malaysian Muslim Students National Organization (known as PKPIM). From 1974 to 1982, ABIM was led by Anwar Ibrahim. ABIM became influential after 1973 for several reasons: (1) the merging of PAS into Barisan Nasional (BN) left a hole in the politics of Malaysia; (2) the firm stand of ABIM, which did not corroborate with any political parties; and (3) its moderate-ness in religious approach allowed it to go into the schools, the government bureaucracy, and a community that were free from influence of PAS. ABIM had influenced PAS supporters who were disappointed with the action of PAS to link with BN.<sup>27</sup>

### The Contribution of ABIM

The motto of ABIM is striving “towards building a society which is based on the principles of Islam’ and ‘presenting Islam as *al-dīn*’ (way of life).<sup>28</sup> Some of its major objectives have included the establishment and propagation of Islamic tenets and principles – as enshrined in the Qur’ān and the Sunnah of Muḥammad (SAAS) – and the mobilization of Muslim youth. The ideology of ABIM is followed by the famous Islamic movements across the continents – such as Jamaat Islami under the leadership of Maulana Maududi in Pakistan and Ikhwanul Muslimin.<sup>29</sup> ABIM has been highly critical of the Malaysian government over issues relating to alleged corruption, abuse of power, and Westernization. Many ABIM activists have occupied key leadership positions in the religious, social, educational, and political arenas – giving it access to affect policy directions and the intensification of the Islamic ethos in the country.<sup>30</sup> Like ABIM, another organization was launched in 1969 named Darul Arqam, which focused on adhering to the Islamic principles in the organization’s policies and activities, and in the behavior and actions of its members.<sup>31</sup> Another organization named PERKIM (Muslim Welfare Organization Malaysia) emerged in the 1960s and declared its aim was to spread Islamic teachings and to be involved in social and welfare activities in Malaysia.<sup>32</sup>

ABIM was established as a result of the youth consciousness to preserve Islam as a way of life.<sup>33</sup> It was not motivated by the sensitivity of an inferiority complex of Malay graduates or a statement of protesting the problem of poverty or a sensitivity to the racist of Malay nations (as a few scholars had claimed). However, it cannot be denied that the energy behind ABIM throughout had been to raise the views regarding to the fate of Malay students and to the poverty in society.<sup>34</sup> As the largest Islamic youth

organization in Malaysia, ABIM was joined by young professionals, and students from colleges and universities in Malaysia and abroad. Since its establishment, ABIM received full support from Muslim students in universities.<sup>35</sup> ABIM has several core objectives:

- to increase the religious activities among people in Malaysia and its neighborhood;
- to struggle for the establishment of a Muslim society, which adopts a way of life based on the principles of Islam;
- to form a faithful group of human beings who have strong commitment to the Islamic struggle;
- to bring about the consciousness of Islam in the society through publications, religious talks, forums, seminars, etc.;
- to encourage the establishment of research groups within the movement;
- to train the workers through encouraging members to study various aspects of Islam;
- to nurture the Islamic mission within the organization in the country and abroad; and
- to establish virtues and good deeds (*amr ma'rūf*) and to prevent the vices and bad deeds in the society (*nahy 'an al-munkar*).<sup>36</sup>

ABIM also emphasizes the practicality, simplicity, and relevance of Islam to the daily lives of Muslims.<sup>37</sup> Fully realizing Malaysia's multi-cultural, multi-religious, and multiracial composition – ABIM claims to take quick action in expressing its dissatisfaction whenever there is any irrational act or intolerance toward other religions or whenever there is injustice in general.<sup>38</sup> ABIM attacks the obvious vices of the abuse of drugs and alcohol, night clubs, and what they see as the general moral laxity of modern city life.<sup>39</sup> Judith Nagata suggests that ABIM always treads carefully without offending any major constituency – whether government, the sultans, rural people, '*ulamā*' (the religious scholars), and non-Muslims.<sup>40</sup> However, ABIM and its leaders were perceived by the Malaysian government as a particularly dangerous adversary. The UMNO leaders did not believe ABIM to be nonpolitical and saw the threat of ABIM allying with PAS or taking on an overtly political role.<sup>41</sup>

ABIM leaders argued that the government policy during the time was to continue the colonist tradition and secular practices that separate religion from politics, society, and the economy. In addition, ABIM leaders claimed that the status of Islam as the official religion of Malaysia is not sufficient. ABIM suggested that the constitution should state clearly that Malaysia is an Islamic state with Islamic law to be based on Shari'ah, *riba* in economics dealings to be forbidden, and a *zakāt* system to replace the tax collection. Subsequently, ABIM (with PKPIM) proposed the establishment of an Islamic bank and university as alternative to the system that had already existed. ABIM criticized the UMNO for making Malay nationalism as its struggle's base but not Islam.<sup>42</sup> Obviously, some of ABIM's positions listed above will hardly promote pluralism, moderation, or political neutrality, as they claimed.

### The Contribution of PAS

Similarly, PAS is an Islamic party in Malaysia, which was established in November 24, 1951; it has taken an incremental approach toward its ultimate objective of Islamic governance, and it has attempted to achieve this goal within the constraints of the Malaysian political system.<sup>43</sup> As the largest and most powerful opposition party in Malaysia, PAS has moved the country's political discourse away from issues of secularism and nationalism toward religious issues. In its pursuit of electoral seats, the group has adapted and evolved as a means of overcoming the considerable challenges it faces, but has never abandoned its central objective of creating an Islamic state in Malaysia.<sup>44</sup> PAS was initially a branch of UMNO, which was established in 1946 by the Malay nationalist movement and was intended to unite the Malay-Muslims of the country in anticipation of independence.<sup>45</sup> The core objective of PAS – which continues to drive its political agenda – is the creation of an Islamic state in Malaysia by elevating what the group perceives to be Islam's purely symbolic status in the constitution to a more substantive and operational level.<sup>46</sup> In its formative years, PAS advocated the creation of an Islamic state in only the most general of terms – failing to provide substantive detail to components such as *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), Islamic economics, and Islamic education.<sup>47</sup>

PAS as an Islamic political party, promotes Islam as a universal religion. The main objectives of PAS include:

- to struggle for establishing the Muslim society by implementing the Islamic values and laws in Malaysia;

- to defend the real teachings of Islam, and the independence and sovereignty of the country;
- to call humanity to practice the teachings of Allah and His Messenger through religious preaching, writings, and understandings;
- to struggle for living an Islamic way of life: economic, political, social, and educational;
- to nurture and strengthen Islamic brotherhood and sisterhood, and to promote unity among people for the sake of political stability and harmony;
- to initiate actions for improving the structure of the society, bringing justice in society;
- to work together with institutions, organizations, or movements that comply with the objectives of PAS, and conform with the law of the country;
- to spread the language (message) of the Holy Qur'ān and to defend Malay as the national language;
- to struggle for building the national culture and tradition of Malaysia according to the value which conform to the teachings of Islam;
- to involve and work together with the United Nations and other international organizations for lasting peace, and guarantee the basic human rights, and to eradicate all types of tyranny, hypocrisy, and dictatorship from society for establishing harmony among all races in the country; and
- to act according to the Malaysian constitution and the law of the country in order to achieve all objectives of PAS<sup>48</sup>

### **The Involvement of ABIM in Malay**

The involvement of ABIM in Malay politics started in 1977 when a political crisis occurred in Kelantan. As a consequence, PAS was divided from BN, and a general election at state level was organized. ABIM supported PAS in this crisis, hoping to protect what they believe to be the dignity of Islam from being corrupted by UMNO. ABIM drove its people and university students to campaign for PAS in Kelantan. However, PAS lost in

the election, and this had a great impact on the development of ABIM. As a result, ABIM started to spread its influence in suburban areas with the support of PAS. The government started to worry that the new linkage between PAS and ABIM was a threat.<sup>49</sup> In the 1978 general election, the bond between ABIM and PAS became closer. Three main leaders of ABIM – namely Ustaz Fadhil Mohd Noor, Ustaz Nakhaie Haji Ahmad, and Syed Ibrahim – were running for the election as representatives of PAS. State-level leaders of ABIM also participated in the election, and one of them was Haji Abdul Hadi Awang from Terengganu. All of them were defeated in the election. Nevertheless, the election gave enthusiasm to ABIM because this was a landslide victory, and PAS expressed its gratitude and appointed three ABIM leaders to hold positions in PAS leadership: Ustaz Nakhaie Ahmad as the Grand Secretary, Ustaz Fadhil Mohd Noor as the Vice President, and Syed Ibrahim as the Treasurer.<sup>50</sup>

ABIM organized a training camp for the leaders of PAS and invited members of PAS to collaborate with them. ABIM's programs in the suburban area were similar to the programs of PAS – thus, creating a perception that ABIM is a stepping stone for individuals intending to get involved with PAS. In spite of their role to assist PAS against UMNO, ABIM also tried to influence the non-Malays to support its policies. It emphasized the problem of race and “The New Economic Policies.”<sup>51</sup> According to ABIM, its solution was to establish an Islamic state. However, people viewed their approach as a threat to UMNO. Hence, DAP invited Anwar Ibrahim to provide clarification about the “Islamic state” to the non-Muslim leaders. While in universities, Muslim students' organization was established under PKPIM to oppose the GPMS, which was dominated by UMNO in 1970s. From 1979 to 1981, ABIM reached its flourishing phase. ABIM was accepted as “*juara ummah*” (the ummah's champion) among people in the suburban area and participated in their social or religious matters. In the city, ABIM moved through the society of students. ABIM became popular until the government had to figure out ways to stop its influence.<sup>52</sup>

Anwar Ibrahim was involved in campus politics in the University of Malaya at the end of 1960s as the president of the University of Malaya Malay Language Society (PBMUM) with its ideology of Malay nationalism. During the tragedy of May 13, 1969, Anwar Ibrahim united a few people from UMNO who have the same ideology as Dr. Mahathir Mohamad to support the elimination of Tunku Abdul Rahman as the Prime Minister because he was too gentle in dealing with issues of the nation, the culture, and the language. Anwar was later active as the president of Malaysian Youth Council (Majlis Belia Malaysia) and was present at the World Youth

Assembly (Perhimpunan Belia Sedunia). Anwar and ABIM did not agree with Sanusi Junid, who withdrew from ABIM and joined UMNO in 1974. At the end of 1974, Anwar was arrested for twenty-two months because of a demonstration supporting the agronomist position in Baling, Kedah. While Sanusi Junid became the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs, and was responsible for the changes in Akta Pertubuhan, but he was opposed by Anwar.<sup>53</sup>

In 1981, a new legal amendment was proposed called *Akta Pertubuhan* (the Act of Organization), which was intended to decrease the number of political organizations. Although it was not directly pointed to ABIM, it was known to be the reason for the act. A few reasons that caused the implementation of the amendment are: ABIM's open support for PAS and its relations with other Islamic organizations like World Association of Muslim Youth (WAMY) and International Islamic Federation Students' Organization (IIFSO), which received support from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and other Arab countries. The provocation against the amendment was led by Anwar Ibrahim, and it was successful, allowing ABIM to broaden its power on the Islamic movement.<sup>54</sup> A few months before the general election in 1982, ABIM announced that they were not supporting any political parties anymore, including PAS. Anwar explained that ABIM was not the same as PAS. They wanted to improve their image as a nonpartisan organization. ABIM felt that its relations with PAS did not benefit it. It also felt that the pressure from the government because of the PAS-ABIM relationship, and that this pressure was interfering with the development of ABIM itself. Thus, ABIM leaders decided to stand alone.<sup>55</sup>

When the relationship between PAS and ABIM started to fall apart, the popularity of Dr. Mahathir Mohamad and Musa Hitam was rising. Dr. Mahathir invited Anwar to join UMNO. And, on March 29, 1982, Anwar officially announced his decision to leave ABIM and to join UMNO. He defeated PAS and became a parliament member of Permatang Pauh. Generally, ABIM leaders forgave Anwar's action and said that Anwar joined UMNO to Islamize UMNO from within. While PAS strongly felt that UMNO is based on anti-Islam and an *Ńassabiyyah* (nationalistic) ideology. PAS leaders believed that the changes in Islam under UMNO leadership are questionable. Later, Anwar conducted an UMNO campaign to defeat the PAS. The winning of UMNO in the 1982 general election was a major success to Dr. Mahathir after he succeeded to bring Anwar into UMNO.<sup>56</sup>

All this progress was a direct benefit to ABIM. In suburban areas, a lot of ABIM supporters were turned to PAS and some of them did not want to be active in any Islamic movement anymore.<sup>57</sup> In addition, PKPIM lost its credibility as a leader of the Islamic movement on campus. As a result

of the decreasing of supporters, some ABIM leaders had no other choices but to follow Anwar forcing Islam onto UMNO and into the government. In order to achieve this objective, the ABIM leaders gave a lot of effort to ensure the success of Islamic institutions like the International Islamic University, Malaysia (IIUM), Bank Islam, and other projects that were associated with the influence of Anwar Ibrahim.<sup>58</sup>

With the support from Dr. Mahathir, Anwar Ibrahim succeeded in politics. In a very short time, Anwar became the Finance Minister and Deputy Prime Minister and, at the same time, expanded his influence in the UMNO and the government.<sup>59</sup> Looking at his achievements, the ABIM leaders were assured by their decision about Anwar back in 1982. ABIM then pursued a new policy: to support Mahathir's leadership, especially the plan of enforcing Islamic values. ABIM also became officially accepted by the government. Since then, ABIM's political policy had changed. At this point, it was not an independent movement, which would criticize the deceptions in society any more.<sup>60</sup> This effort has been taken over by PAS, although PAS may not have been as competent and effective as ABIM.<sup>61</sup> ABIM introduced modern reforms in political change and strategy. It also managed to get support from the Muslims and introduced Islam as an alternative to capitalism and socialism.<sup>62</sup>

### **PAS's Effort to Establish an Islamic State**

PAS did not neglect international issues either. This was demonstrated at the tenth PAS conference that proposed to jostle the governments – opposing Burma's Buddhism (where the mosques were burnt in Rangoon), and supporting the struggle of Algerians from French colonization.<sup>63</sup> At the conference, the issue of Melayu Raya<sup>64</sup> was also raised by the members of PAS. They argued that Melayu Raya is small and narrow. It is supported by the former colonizers – thus, clearly it brings benefits from this economic and political interest. The suggestion of Melayu Raya was also supported by certain political figures in this country who did not realize the danger of the establishment of Melayu Raya.<sup>65</sup> PAS continued its struggle to awaken all Muslims to form a country with the blessings of Allāh – that is, an Islamic state. PAS intended to prove that the Islamic polity is for anyone who loves peace and prosperity. The ambition of PAS is based on *taqwa*, (to do good deeds for Allāh, SWT, and to benefit the community).<sup>66</sup> PAS challenged the government to put aside procapitalism in the economy and to pay more attention to sub-

economic field in order to benefit the people. PAS wanted Malaysia to be a peaceful country, where the benefits could be enjoyed by all of its citizens.<sup>67</sup>

According to Dr. Burhanuddin Hilmi, the government had used religion as a tool to lengthen its political influence. *Iman* is essential in facing the challenges in politics, and thus, PAS will defeat any materialistic element in Islamic movement.<sup>68</sup> He also emphasized the communist threats. Although the conflict of ideology between Russia and China is rising, people should also be aware of the expansion of Russia's influence into Europe, and the movement of the Chinese into Asia. Communism today does not move with violence but as a political movement, which is a contradiction to democracy and Islam.<sup>69</sup> Dr. Burhanuddin Hilmi has insisted that the duty of PAS is to fight as a political movement – according to its principle, based on Islamic ideologies, to maintain peace and equality. Thus the Muslims must not be suspicious about PAS.<sup>70</sup>

Dr. Burhanuddin Hilmi maintained that there is no developmental planning for the poor in the country, except for the controlling of their economy by the people who suppressed them. Besides putting taxes on them, there is only law that can stop these people. The government helps to reduce expenses but is extravagant in other areas. According to Islam, the benefits of the economy should be for both people and the owners, not only on property and money.<sup>71</sup> The development of an economy should be balanced with the development of morality. Dr. Burhanuddin claimed that there is no use to give pride to big factories that are owned by foreign corporations and treat their own people as their coolies. Malaysians have to improve themselves and become free from foreign domination.<sup>72</sup>

According to Dr. Burhanuddin Hilmi, the ways to overcome the tenses in Malaysia are establishing: (1) a cooperative policy on peacefulness; (2) for people's security, forbidding nuclear weapon; (3) protecting and respecting individual rights; and (4) abrogating the veto power in United Nations.<sup>73</sup> In the upheaval of politics in Malaysia, PAS appeared with the ambition of establishing an Islamic state. It is based on the light of Prophet and his companions, who succeeded in forming a basic Islamic state under their leadership. The strength of PAS as an Islamic party is based on the members' knowledge of Islam. Thus, the members have to learn about Islam in depth and master this knowledge.<sup>74</sup>

The PAS leader, Haji Abdul Hadi Awang (from 2003 till present), criticized the negligence of the Malaysia religious affairs department in dealing with religious issues in the society, especially because the department of

religious affairs has the right to take action against misleading teachings of Islam that had occurred. He also criticized the Malaysian constitution with a proof of a statement made by Malaysian Chief Justice, Tan Sri Datuk Salleh Abbas, which claimed that Malaysia is applying the secular laws that are not based on religion.<sup>75</sup> Haji Abdul Hadi Awang added that Tan Sri Datuk Salleh Abbas held the opinion that Islamic laws are only applicable to matters like marriage, alimony, and property allotment – while state administration, the creation of agreements, business, crime, and other matters are judged with reference to the Akta Parliament. Tan Sri Datuk Salleh Abbas said that the Malaysian constitution is the prime law of Malaysia, and whatever that had been approved after independence and contradicting the constitution are considered null. Looking at the constitution, the power that is given to the government was placing the constitution above the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth.<sup>76</sup> In addition, Salleh Abbas stated clearly that these positions, though speaking directly to the Islamic constituency of PAS, are not in sync with the harmonious aspirations of a multi-religious and multi-ethnic nation like Malaysia. The general PAS leadership – under Murshidul-Am-cum-Chief Minister of Kelantan Haji Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat – has brought to PAS members at least the need for six changes regarding attitude, political vision, and approach.<sup>77</sup> First, there was a drive for self-assessment and correction among the individual members and within the party itself. Second, the priority and the special concentration was given to both increasing the understanding of Islamic knowledge and the implementation of the laws of Allāh in their daily lives. Third, PAS members' mode of thinking was gradually changed from being obsessed with secularism and materialism to the concentration on the rights of human beings as the vicegerents and creation of Allāh. Fourth, Islamic scholars (*'ulamā'*) have become no more than been merely a symbol in the party but instead they should be the main mover in the party's struggle. Fifth, PAS' image as merely a “welfare political organization” has been changed to a commercial one with its own cooperative and businesses in order to raise the living standards of its members and strengthen the party's funds and finances. And sixth, the new PAS leadership has been more rational and has opened itself to a wider audience – that is, its cooperation with the Chinese consultative council and other non-Islamic organizations).<sup>78</sup>

Besides, those Islamic political organizations and other Islamic institutions have been established that promote Islamic Awakening in Malaysia. Islam became the vehicle through which Malays in general challenged the British-controlled Malay aristocracy.<sup>79</sup> Islamic revivalism is not a new phenomenon in the Malaysia; it has occurred in Malaysian history

at regular intervals.<sup>80</sup> In Malaysia, the pro-Islamic state leadership managed to appropriate and incorporate Islam into national vision by flexibly and pragmatically interpreting and rationalizing the religious doctrines. The practical implementation of these principles – Islamic universalism in particular – helped lay an inclusive ideological foundation for a newly emerging Malaysian nationhood.<sup>81</sup> Given the full patronage of the government, an Islamic think-tank, the IKIM (Institut Kefahaman Islam Malaysia or Malaysian Institute of Islamic Understanding) was established in 1992 – and, together with other national Islamic agencies – spearheaded various programs to propagate more progressive Islamic views congruent with the UMNO’s version of a “modern” Islam.<sup>82</sup> The government tackled the key areas of: Sharī‘ah courts and the judicial establishment, mosques, religious schools and *zakāt* (alms) collection – as well as religious affairs, in general, and the ‘*ulamā*’ in particular.<sup>83</sup>

The interrelationship of being Muslim and Malay has led to perceptions among the Malays of an integrated whole that includes lifestyle, values, language, and religion – thus, secular education, Western materialism, and other aspects of modernization are perceived by many Malays to be challenges to both the religious and ethnic foundations of the society.<sup>84</sup> Therefore, Islam has become associated with the mainstream culture and way of life among the Malays. Social interaction, norms of behavior (*adat*), social institutions, and political activism were shaped by the ideals of Islam. In this regard, Malaysia has a long history of Islamic revivalism. However, the trend of Islamic Awakening has truly begun to be integrated into the way of life of people with the process of Islamization at a wider scale. Therefore, various institutions have been established – such as, Islamic universities, Islamic banking and insurance, and other Islamic organizations and institutions.

### **Islamization in Malaysia**

The wave of Islamization began in Malaysia during early 1970s. The development of Islamic revivalism in Malaysia saw the establishment of more faith-based educational institutions and better provisions for those of the Islamic faith. Consequently, the Malaysian people witnessed the emergence of the Islamic banking and financial system, Islamic university and colleges, and an Islamic administration system. Now part of what the Islamic movements initially strove for and envisaged is being realized by the government.<sup>85</sup> In March 1982, Mahathir Mohamad, the former prime minister of Malaysia announced the decision to establish an International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). IIUM operates under the direction

of a board of governors with representatives from the eight sponsoring governments and the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC). Currently, in order to smoothly run the university, the Malaysian government administers the key source of funding. IIUM is the only Islamic university that uses English as its medium of instruction and administration since its inception. It blends in a creative and harmonious fashion the modern and professional disciplines with traditional values and moral virtues. Its female student population is more than the male, and students come from more than ninety countries.<sup>86</sup> The philosophy of the university was inspired by the recommendations of the First World Conference on Muslim Education held in Mecca in 1398/ 1977. The spirit of this philosophy is based on the Holy Qur'ān, in particular the five verses revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), namely Qur'ān (96:1–5). According to this philosophy, knowledge shall be propagated in the spirit of *tawhīd*, leading toward the recognition of Allāh as the absolute creator and master of humankind. In this way, the seeking of knowledge is regarded as an act of worship. This is because knowledge is a form of trust (*amānah*) from Allāh to human, and hence, humans should utilize this knowledge according to Allāh's will in performing their role as the servants and vicegerents (*khalīfah*) of Allāh on earth.<sup>87</sup>

The exclusive Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC) was founded in 1987 as a postgraduate institute by Syed Naquib al-Attas, the former Dean of the Arts Faculty at the University of Malaya. Anwar Ibrahim, a former student and longstanding friend of al-Attas, was behind its financing and remained its sponsor until 1998. Other Islamic organizations like the Institute of Islamic Understanding Malaysia (IKIM) were established in February 18, 1992 under the Companies Act of 1965; the purpose of IKIM was to promote a clear understanding of Islam through various programs and activities – such as seminars, workshops, consultation, training, and through publications. In promoting the understanding of Islam on a global scale, IKIM provides an open and free environment for everyone to voice his or her opinions in addressing pertinent issues. IKIM's mission is striving to enhance the understanding of Islam among Muslims and non-Muslims by highlighting its universal values and all-encompassing principles, which are true and relevant to our daily lives.<sup>88</sup>

Another breakthrough in the promotion of Islamic awakening in Malaysia is the enhancement of the *ḥalāl* industry (similar to kosher in Judaism). *Ḥalāl* is a unique concept that combines the aspects of being lawful, pure, hygienic, and is permitted by the principles of Islam. *Ḥalāl* food certification refers to the examination of food processes – from the prepara-

tion, slaughtering, ingredients used, cleaning, handling, and processing – right down to transportation and distribution. All steps in the process are according to the principles outlined by the Sharī‘ah.<sup>89</sup> The concept of *ḥalāl* food has gained a wide currency in Malaysia, and its neighboring countries. Malaysia has proven that the *ḥalāl* market is an economically viable tool, and that *ḥalāl*-certified products ensure better hygiene consciousness. The country has already attracted large markets – including Nestle, Tesco UK, McDonalds, KFC, Burger King, and LSG Skycheffs. The *ḥalāl* food market is estimated at \$150 billion a year with 1.8 billion Muslim consumers spread over 112 countries.<sup>90</sup> Malaysian government plans to extend the *ḥalāl* market in the North America.

The judicial system in Malaysia is based on the dual court system of the British common law and Sharī‘ah law – with both Islamic law and *adat* constituting significant sources of law, particularly in matters of personal status. While Sharī‘ah courts handle civil matters for Muslims, civil courts rule on the same for non-Muslims. In recent years, the Sharī‘ah court has been updated and revised. The Kelantan Sharī‘ah Criminal Code Enactment 1993, relating to the application of *iadd* (divine ordinance) penalties, has been passed by State legislature but has not been brought into force. Civil law (and family law as subset of civil law) comes under federal legislature’s jurisdiction. However, persons of the Malay race are defined as Muslims under the constitution; States are empowered to make personal laws governing Muslims and laws relating to religious offences – and to establish and regulate Sharī‘ah courts in the application of Islamic law. Family law relating to non-Muslims is in the federal jurisdiction. Each State has *Majlis* (Council of Religion and Malay Custom) issuing *fatāwā* (formal legal opinions) generally in keeping with Shafī‘i tenets, except where such may conflict with public interest.<sup>91</sup>

Likewise, the Malaysian banking and financing sector is largely based on Islamic Sharī‘ah principles. The interest *rībā*-free Islamic banking is one of the sectors that has attracted not only national level Chinese-run banks, but also international banks in order to open special branches alongside the conventional banking in the country. Major international banks (for example, Citibank, HSBC, and Standard Chartered Bank) have Islamic branches across the country. Bank Islam Malaysia Bhd. (BIMB) was established after the enacting of the Islamic Banking Act (IBA) in 1983; the IBA permitted the establishment of the first Islamic bank in Malaysia. The establishment of BIMB also marked a new milestone for the development of the Islamic financial system in Malaysia. BIMB carries out banking business similar to other commercial banks, but along the principles of

the Sharī'ah. The bank offers deposit-taking products such as current and savings deposit under the concept of *al-wadi'ah yad al-dhimmah* (guaranteed custody) and investment deposits under the concept of *al-muḍārabah* (profit-sharing). The bank grants financing facilities such as working capital financing under *al-murābahah* (cost plus), house financing under *bai' bithaman Ējil* (a deferred payment sale), leasing under *al-ijārah* (leasing), and project financing under *al-Mushārah* (profit and loss sharing).<sup>92</sup> In addition, On October 1 1999, a second Islamic bank, the Bank Muamalat Malaysia Bhd. (BMMB) began operations.

Similarly, the Islamic insurance system (*takāful*) has captured large markets in Malaysia. The concept of *takāful* (Islamic insurance) was first introduced in Malaysia in 1985 when the first *takāful* operator was established to fulfill the need of the general public to be protected based on the Islamic principles. The legal basis for the establishment of *takāful* operators was the Takaful Act which came into effect in 1984.<sup>93</sup> Major banks and insurance companies have their own Sharī'ah board to check whether the monetary transaction properly complies with Islamic principles.

On the whole, the multicultural nature of Malaysia has facilitated religious revivalism. As mentioned earlier, Islamic awakening in Malaysia is attached to the Malay identity as being Muslim and the source of social cohesion and harmony. In reality, except for a fringe extremist element, Islam has not been a threatening force in Malaysian society, and has generally promoted solidarity and welfare in the society. Historically, Islamic consciousness was built into the Malay society centuries earlier. The process of mass Islamization in the late 1970s and early 1980s reshaped and rejuvenated the process of Islamic awakening among the Malay Muslims. Hence, the government has to be cautious about implementing new policies, since Malay people are cognizant about the principles of Sharī'ah to be implemented.

In retrospect, the Muslim community in the Malay world has gone through six major periods in the long process of Islamization:<sup>94</sup>

- the period of initial conversion to Islam, which indicated a sweeping change in a belief system from polytheism to Islamic monotheism.
- the period of living in independent Muslim sultanates, which merged Islamic beliefs and practices with pre-Islamic Malay customs (*adat*) and values.
- the advent of puritanical and reformist movements intended to purify the beliefs and practices from non-Islamic accretions, superstitions, and deviant mysticism.

- the struggle against European imperialism that intensified the consciousness of *jihād* as religiously motivated armed resistance against foreign colonizers.
- the post-independence period witnessed the ideological and political struggle between reformist-oriented Muslims and the secular-oriented political forces, systems, and elites. It was in this period that the idea of an Islamic state was initially discussed as a solution for the resistance to the nationalists' preference for a political system and government in which religion did not play a major or determinant role. In the seventies, the notion of Islam as a complete way of life and not just a religion in the Western sense of the word was widely advocated by reformist Muslim intellectuals and Islamic youth movements in response to the secularizing tendencies of the Westernized-ruling elites, who were bringing about changes in the name of modernization and national development. Da'wah (invitation to Islam) then became the new policies of Islamic reformist activism and struggle.
- the Islamic resurgence of post-1979 the Islamic revolution in Iran influenced several Islamic movements in Malaysia – especially PAS and ABIM. Islamist movements, political parties, and youth organizations in Malaysia received a new wave of life and a new confidence among the Muslim communities in Southeast Asia.

The Malaysian system also allows an Islamist opposition party, named PAS, since independence to openly declare its goal to be of an Islamic state, and there were vigorous campaigns for it before every national election, and PAS finally managed to secure victory in two predominantly Malay states of Kelantan and Trengganu.<sup>95</sup> PAS and also ABIM were influenced by the writings of Sayyid Qutb, such as *Ma'ālim fi'l-Ṭariq*. By the end of 1970s up to 1980s, the influence of the writings of Sayyid Qutb reoriented PAS to be more radical in achieving its political goals. PAS also published several books criticizing the government and the Internal Security Acts for incorporating non-Islamic elements in the country's political system. In an attempt to scare people, some of the members of PAS went too far and marginalized the groups that belonged to and supported the government and accusing them as *kāfir* (unbelief/infidelity). During this period, there were serious clashes between the government and PAS; for example, in the village of Memali in the district of Baling in the state of Kedah in 1985, the police shot members of PAS suspected of criminal activities. This was done to make the place secure and more harmonious for people and to establish the rule of law. However, from the 1990s onwards, in order to be

more acceptable to the society, PAS changed its policies and approaches in spreading Islamic political ideologies moderate. As a result, the opposition parties were able to secure 82 seats (out of 222 seats in parliament) or 36.9 percent of parliamentary seats, with PAS securing 23 seats.<sup>96</sup>

Regardless of these successes, Islamic Awakening has often been received with negative reactions from non-Muslim groups in Malaysia. As pointed out by Ahmad Yousif, several scholars criticized Islamic Awakening by asserting that it causes “a general fear among non-Muslims that their religious freedom cannot be guaranteed under a situation of Islamic competition and expansionism.”<sup>97</sup> It is particularly important to address this issue because all Malays in Malaysia are Muslims by birth, and as such, their ethnic identity is directly associated with their religious one. Therefore, non-Muslim groups may view Islamic Awakening as a tool for the Malays to gain disproportionate sociopolitical dominance over the non-Malays. However, Ahmad Yousif argued that while Islamic revivalism ascertains religion as a very significant part of one’s identity, it gives people “complete freedom to adhere their religion in all of its manifestations,” inasmuch as they do not beguile the supremacy of God.<sup>98</sup> Therefore, the promotion of religious diversity is a key to achieve religious tolerance and mutual respect among people. Furthermore, the purpose of Islamic Awakening in Malaysia is to strengthen religious faith among Muslims, rather than dominate others politically.

Tracing the non-Muslim responses to Islamic revivalism in Malaysia in the existing literature, Amini Amir Abdullah pointed out several concerns that they raise. These include: Islamization policy that creates fear among non-Muslims about the impingement of their constitutional rights; an education policy that forces religious teachings; the implementation of Sharī‘ah laws that would cause discrimination (for example, non-Muslims not being given key government posts in an Islamic administration); significant restrictions on the non-Muslim religious activities (for example, difficulty in getting approval for the building of a church or temple), a ban on using certain words that are considered to be of Islamic origin, and a breach in religious freedom.<sup>99</sup>

## Conclusion

In Malaysia, Islamic Awakening started to emerge by the end of 1960s with the Islamization process, which was partially influenced by the philosophy of the Muslim Brotherhood. The revitalization of Islamic Awakening paved the way to establishing a comprehensive social system, which would guarantee the promotion of Islamic solidarity in Malaysia. Several

Islamic organizations were established and promoted Islamic consciousness among the masses. For instance, the Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia (ABIM) and several others wanted to establish a Islamic society based on the principles of Sharī'ah – presenting Islam as *al-dīn*' (a way of life). ABIM is the voice of youth in enhancing the establishment of Muslim society – the goal is to adopt a way of life based on the principles of Islam, to establish virtues and good deeds (*amr bi al-ma'rūf*), and to prevent the vices and bad deeds in the society (*nahy 'an al-munkar*).

Similarly, the Islamic party in Malaysia (PAS), the main opposition party in Malaysian politics, was established with the view of making Malaysia an Islamic state. PAS wants to establish a Malaysian society by implementing Islamic values and laws, and to promote unity among people. In recent times, the new leadership in PAS has helped the organization by changing its attitude, political vision, and approach. Islamic movements in Malaysia are more politically oriented than that of other countries like Egypt, because in Malaysia the government and NGOs (as opposed to independent agencies) carry out most of the acts of Islamization.<sup>100</sup>

There are numerous other Islamic educational and financial institutions that strengthen the process of Islamic Awakening in Malaysia. The International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) and Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC) were established with a view to blend the modern and Islamic education system for producing Muslims who can contribute to the current competitive world. The *halāl* food market in Malaysia has been proven to be an economically viable tool, and has attracted large number of consumers from different parts of the world to consume clean and hygienic food. In addition, the Islamic system of banking and financial dealings has attracted not only local banks but also major international banks in Malaysia. This is due to the fact that people are interested in doing business that would not lead to sin. Overall, Islamic Awakening promotes solidarity and welfare in the plural society of Malaysia.

## Endnotes

1. The terms *Islamic Awakening*' and '*Islamic revivalism* are often used interchangeably in the literature, both having political implications. In this paper, we also use them interchangeably to mean a general notion of the Islamization of Malaysian society for the promotion of Islamic teachings and its implementation through various social and political organizations in Malaysia.
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