



5A-4, Block F1, Jalan PJU 1/42A, Dataran Prima, 47301 Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia.  
tel +603 7803 2545 fax +603 7803 2543 email megcentre@gmail.com

**Press Statement**  
**5 February 2008**

The Middle-Eastern Graduates Centre (MEGC) wishes to express its deep shock and profound disappointment at the decision by the Internal Security Ministry to ban one of its publications, "Islam dan Pluralisme", together with ten other books, as was reported in the press on 29 and 30 January 2008.

Apart from the fact that the statement announcing the ban by the Ministry was couched in the vaguest of terms and seemed to be an arbitrary exercise of power, we also regard the ban as a move that is in conflict with the spirit of knowledge and progress that is expressed in the fundamental ideas of Islam Hadhari as promoted by the Prime Minister.

The Internal Security Ministry has never informed us of its concerns, and did not provide any firm justification or evidence to support its decision when it announced the ban.

"Islam dan Pluralisme" was published, among other reasons, as part of a debate to comment on a fatwa issued by the Ulama Council of Indonesia (MUI) that declared pluralism, liberalism and secularism to be beliefs that were forbidden (*haram*) to Muslims. In the wake of this fatwa, certain parties in Malaysia organised programmes - through discussions and published writings - to support the fatwa.

At that time, not a single effort was made in this country to clarify or explain in a balanced manner those disputed ideas. MEGC published "Islam dan Pluralisme" as a contribution towards furthering the intellectual debate about this subject.

Aware as we are that pluralism is not a notion alien to the Islamic intellectual tradition, we compiled and translated writings that attempt to clarify the reality of plurality and the presence of religious pluralism in the key Islamic religious texts (the Quran and Hadith), in Islamic history and Islamic tradition, and in the works of major Muslim figures, particularly in Sufi thought.

We are also puzzled by the statement of an official from the Internal Security Ministry, Che Din Yusoh, who was quoted as saying that “If these publications are allowed to circulate, they could give rise to confusion and anxiety in the Muslim community and consequently disturb public peace.”

If anything, the publication of “Islam dan Pluralisme” was intended to be a contribution to the development of a religious community that is more open and that can live in harmony with others in a multiracial, multifaith, and multicultural society such as exists in Malaysia.

We are therefore bewildered by the decision to ban this book because it is a negation of the efforts to create a Malaysian nation that is a real family, living in mutual understanding and with openness towards one another, and bonded by a profound awareness of our common humanity.

MEGC will be writing to the Internal Security Ministry seeking detailed reasons and justifications for its actions in banning our publication. MEGC also hopes that the Ministry will reconsider and withdraw the ban.

**Al-Mustaqeem Mahmud Radhi**

Executive Director

Telephone: +6019 267 23 30