



FEB 12 — The Islamic Renaissance Front strongly condemns the deportation of Hamza Kashgari over his allegedly offensive tweets.

Due to the irresponsible and cowardly actions of the Malaysian government in enabling the deportation, Mr Kashragi now faces the possibility of the death penalty in his home country of Saudi Arabia for the simple act of demanding his right to practice the most basic human rights – freedom of expression and thought.

Since the Syri'ah Law that is practised in Saudi – just like any other Muslim countries that implement Syari'ah – is subject to individual interpretation by the clerics, and Saudi is known to have a very poor record in ensuring fair trials compounded by a history of denial of rights to lawyers and clients; we do not feel that Hamza Kashgari will stand a fair trial.

More importantly, Mr Kashgari has already removed the tweets and apologized for his statements. We believe no further punishment is necessary upon the trauma he had already endured being on the run for such an innocuous act what more while facing the risk of punishment by death.

In this, we wish to remind Muslims of the importance of forgiveness in Islam. The importance accorded to forgiveness in Islam is very much tied to another key value of the deen which is the freedom of speech and conscience. This can be seen clearly in verse 256 of Al-Baqarah which states that “There shall be no coercion in matters of faith. Distinct has now become the right way from [the way of] error...”

Humans were created as subjects of freedom, divinely endowed with the rational faculties needed to be able to determine what is right and wrong on their own accord without the threat or imposition of external forces. The development of character depends on our ability to make that journey towards the good on terms we can relate to and understand most.

This is the core of any ethical system whereby meaningful choices and virtuous acts find their meaning on the basis that they have been willed freely by the person. For if coercion is what is

needed most to ensure good conduct, then notions of love, solidarity, genuine trust or sincerity lose their meaning.

In appealing for the humane treatment of Mr Kashgari, the Islamic Renaissance Front once again points to the values of freedom, justice and democracy in Islam.

We are also deeply disappointed with the complicity of the Malaysian government for succumbing to pressures to deport Mr Kashragi. As a member of the United Nations Human Rights Council, Malaysia could have used this opportunity to set an example to the region, if not the entire Muslim world, of what responsible governance based on human rights could be.

Instead, with barely a pause in its conscience, the Malaysian government saw no problems deporting someone accused guilty for the supposed crime of tweeting his opinions.

The Islamic Renaissance Front adjures that the Malaysian government should just step down from the Human Rights Council so that the world would no longer be led to believe that Malaysia somehow stands for something it actually does not. The reality is that beneath the proliferation of malls and skyscrapers, we are still of an administration that does not understand

basic human compassion.

This will save everyone's time.

The deportation of Hamza Kashgari despite a High Court order preventing it is clearly a show of disrespect and a contempt of court. The Home Minister Datuk Seri Hishamuddin Hussein must be held responsible for this wicked and egregious act. Considering that Malaysia has no extradition treaty with Saudi Arabia, the deportation is a clear insolent and uncivil act and in breach of international laws.

There is nothing to be proud of being a part of the so-called Global Movement of Moderates. It is just another superficial and manipulative evocations of democracy and rights. Today is indeed a very sad day to be Malaysians and Muslims.

*Dr Ahmad Farouk Musa, Ahmad Fuad Rahmat, Edry Faizal Eddy Yusuf and Muhammad Nazreen Jaafar from the Islamic Renaissance Front sent the above article.*

