

# Knowing one another's customs important, says Halimah

## Inaugural Syariah Law Forum goes a long way in nurturing culture of open sharing

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Learning about one another's customs is an important ongoing process and the inaugural Syariah Law Forum goes a long way in fostering a culture of open sharing, said Speaker of Parliament Halimah Yacob yesterday.

"Our country takes a unique approach by creating mechanisms that look after the rights of Malays and Muslims while at the same time, ensuring the rights of all minorities," she told about 170 guests at the forum at the Bukit Timah campus of the National University of Singapore (NUS).

"In doing so, Singapore avoids undermining the meritocratic processes that underpin its governance."

These mechanisms include the Presidential Council for Minority Rights, the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (Muis), the Registry of Muslim Marriages and the Syariah Court.

The role of syariah law operates



OPENSARING VITAL

We are living in a time of uncertainty and unpredictability, where user-generated news and information spread so quickly. Due to this, misunderstandings and misconceptions can flare up very quickly and degenerate into conflicts just as swiftly.



SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT  
HALIMAH YACOB

in Singapore by governing Muslim family- and personal law-related issues in areas such as divorce, she noted.

She added that events such as the Syariah Law Forum serve as a platform for open sharing on the functions underpinning Singapore and the philosophy coursing through it, within the context of racial and religious interests.

A book titled *Navigating Muslim Law In Singapore* by 16 NUS law students was also launched at the event. It aims to benefit those who are interested in learning more about Muslim law. These include law students, lawyers and aggrieved litigants-in-person.

By next month, the 65-page book will be made available at NUS' C.J. Koh Law Library at the Bukit Timah campus, and the National Library. Five hundred copies will be printed and members of the public can also get them free at mosques and social service centres.

Ms Sheiffa Safi Shirbeeni, 22, one of the 16 authors, said the law students organised the forum as a platform for people in Singapore to learn more about syariah and to correct misconceptions.

Stressing that 14 members of her team are non-Muslims, the second-year student who led the forum, added: "We believe anyone can benefit from an understanding of what syariah is, and how it is really applied in Singapore."

The need to continuously strengthen Islamic learning was also highlighted at the 52nd Mosque Council Meeting yesterday at the Al-Muttaqin Mosque in Ang Mo Kio Avenue 6.

In his speech, Muis chief executive Abdul Razak Maricar said: "We must be particularly mindful of teachings that can divide our community and weaken its cohesiveness."

"Any form of misguided teaching, if not detected early, may take root and spread like wild fire, especially in this age of social media."

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