

Seminar on Indonesia's Mandatory Halal Law 2019 (IAIS Malaysia, 19 January 2019)

Mohammad Mahbubi Ali

On 19 January 2019, ARK Halal and Halal Industry Development Corporation (HDC), with the support of IAIS Malaysia, organised a half-day seminar on Indonesia's Mandatory Halal Law 2019. The event featured two distinguished speakers, namely Prof. Sukoso, head of Halal Product Assurance Organising Agency (BPJH), and Mr Shafie Shamsuddin, the President Director and CEO of Trans Retail Indonesia.

The event attracted around 200 local and international participants, consisting of regulators, academics, researchers, businessmen, and Islamic financial institutions. The day began with a welcoming remark by Mr Imran Musa, the Group CEO of ARK Halal, followed by a keynote speech by Dato' Seri Jamil Bidin, the former CEO of Halal Industry Development Corporation (HDC).

In the first session, Prof Sukoso offered fresh insights into the legal implementation of *Republic of Indonesia No. 33 year 2014* regarding Halal Products Assurance. His presentation revolved around the changes in *halal* labelling, the requirements for *halal* food production, *halal* cosmetics production, *halal* pharmaceuticals and recognition of foreign *halal* certificates. Right after Prof Sukoso, Mr Shafii shared his vast corporate experience on the challenges and opportunities involved in venturing a new business into the Indonesian market. These included managing political dynamics, addressing social sentiment, and the Muslim consumer lifestyle ecosystem.

Research Camp for Academic and Policy Research (IAIS Malaysia, 21-22 February 2019)

Abdul Muhaimin Misran

What started as an experimental training session turned out to be a success as IAIS Malaysia's "Research Camp for Academic and Policy Research" saw more than 70 participants from various backgrounds.

During the two-day training programme, participants were introduced to six modules, namely: (1) Policy Research for an Islamic Think-Thank; (2) A Brief Guide for Designing Policy Issue Papers; (3) Essential Skills to Write a Newspaper

Article; (4) Constructing Quality Academic Papers: The Oxford Style of Writing; (5) The Art of Referring to Islamic Sources & Its Common Pitfalls; and lastly (6) The Theory and Practice for Quantitative Research by Using STATA.

The presenters and instructors were all IAIS Malaysia's in-house experts and researchers: Prof. Mohammad Hashim Kamali (Founding CEO), Assoc. Prof. Dr Mohamed Azam (Deputy CEO), Dr Alexander Wain (Associate Fellow), Dr Ahmad Badri (Research Fellow), Mohd Fariz (Head of Human Resource), Dr Mohammad Mahbubi Ali (Associate Fellow), and Dr M. Rizky (Research Consultant). From the success of this pilot training, IAIS Malaysia seeks to produce more extensive academic training modules in line with future demands.

Forum on “Unlocking the Enigma of The Lord of the Rings (LOTR)” (International Islamic University Malaysia, 25 March 2019)

Abdul Muhaimin Misran

IAIS Malaysia in collaboration with the Department of English Language and Literature (DELL), International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), successfully organised a forum, “Unlocking the Enigma of The Lord of the Rings (LOTR)” on 25 March 2019. The event, which was held at HS Seminar Room, IIUM, attracted more than 150 arts and literature enthusiasts.

The first session talked about ‘Myth, Fantasy and Fairy-Story in Tolkien’s Middle-Earth’ and was presented by Ms. Buveneswary Vathemurthy, an MA holder in English Literature, University of Malaya. The session, however, was not limited to the LOTR but also to Tolkien’s other works in *The Legendarium* (*The Silmarillion* and *The Hobbit*).

The second session on “Tolkien’s Orcs” was presented by Dr David C.E Tneh, Dean of the Faculty of Creative Industries, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR). In J. R. R. Tolkien’s fantasy writings, Orcs are a race of creatures who are used as soldiers and henchmen by both the greater and lesser villains of *The Silmarillion*, *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*.

The third session was uniquely different as Dr Alexander Wain, a historian who obtained his DPhil in history from the University of Oxford, presented on “Symbolism in The Lord of the Rings”, not from a literary point of view but from that of history. According Dr Wain, the symbolism represented in Tolkien’s works were inspired by his personal life.

The event was meant for the development of literature, art, culture and education. It delved in-depth into universal values of good, evil and morality