

from various perspectives, including semiotics and symbolism in literary works. Since its publication 65 years ago, J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* has emerged as an international phenomenon, transcending its humble origins as the pastime of an Oxford University professor and traversing cultural boundaries to sell more than 150 million copies worldwide in over 38 languages.

**Forum on the Uyghurs' Plight: Countering Extremism or Religious
Discrimination?
(IAIS Malaysia, 2 April 2019)**

Wan Naim Wan Mansor

The unfolding crisis in Xinjiang has witnessed the large-scale forced Sinicization of the Uyghur community at the hands of the Chinese government. Global uproar and condemnation have focused on the flagrant violation of human rights in Xinjiang, where Uyghurs have experienced mass incarcerations, discrimination, surveillance, and intrusion. Against this backdrop, IAIS Malaysia, in collaboration with JUST, MAPIM, and Global Peace Malaysia, organised the above-mentioned forum. The event was moderated by Dr Mohammed Azam (Deputy CEO of IAIS Malaysia) and featured four panellists: Mohd Azmi Abd Hamid (President of MAPIM), Dr Alexander Wain (IAIS Malaysia), Ahmad Fahmi Mohd Shamsudin (CEO of Global Peace Malaysia), and Hassanal Noor Rashid (Project Coordinator from JUST). Several issues pursuant to the crisis were explored by the speakers, including geopolitical context, international relations, Han Chinese nationalism, the Uyghur's history of separatism, and the internal politics of Xinjiang. Also discussed were the responses of Muslim countries to this crisis and possible actionable steps that might be taken to help mitigate it.

Dr Alexander, focusing on the historical relationship between the Uyghurs and the Chinese government, concluding that the current situation in Xinjiang is largely the product of regional history and must be understood within that context. When finding a solution, decision-making must be pragmatic and moderate: 1) while the Uyghurs originated far beyond China's borders and possess a unique cultural identity, they are currently citizens of China and must accept that reality; and 2) the Chinese government must recognise the right of the Uyghurs to cultural self-determination and that oppression, far from reducing extremism, only encourages it.

The other speakers, Mohd Azmi, Ahmad Fahmi, and Hassanal Noor, shared similar thoughts with regards to the Uyghur crisis, condemning the documented

atrocities, including the setting up of camps across the region, where up to a million Uyghurs have been detained. As the situation in Xinjiang continues, the speakers implored the global community to play its part in ending the tragedy. In particular, Malaysia can mediate with the Chinese government, to placate fears that this episode might be hijacked as part of the geopolitical contest between China and the US.

The event saw a turnout of around 100, including representatives from several embassies.

**Forum on Civilisation and Global Peace: The Concept of Peace and Social Justice According to Shaykh Abdullah ibn Bayyah
(Konsep Keamanan dan Keadilan Sosial Menurut Shaykh Abdullah bin Bayyah)
(IAIS Malaysia, 30 April 2019)**

Ahmad Badri Abdullah

On 30 April 2019, IAIS Malaysia, along with its co-organisers al-Naqiy Islamic Solutions, the Malaysian Islamic Youth Association (ABIM), the National Union of Malaysian Malay Students (PKPIM), the Malaysian Youth Council (MBM) and Ilham Books, held a forum entitled ‘Konsep Keamanan dan Keadilan Sosial Menurut Shaykh Abdullah bin Bayyah’ (The Concept of Peace and Social Justice according to Shaykh Abdullah ibn Bayyah). The event was officiated by Nurul Izzah Anwar, the Member of Parliament for Permatang Pauh. In her keynote speech, Nurul Izzah Anwar stressed the critical importance of Abdullah ibn Bayyah’s message, which relentlessly prioritises peace while celebrating the plurality of social realities amid the security crises currently plaguing the Muslim *Ummah*. Furthermore, Nurul Izzah Anwar also stressed how Ibn Bayyah’s approach combined mastery of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) with the spirituality of *tasawwuf* (mysticism) in order to exhibit the beauty of Islamic teachings and exemplify its moderation. This trend can also be identified in Ibn Bayyah’s commitment to maintaining the functional balance between revelation and reason seen throughout his writings and speeches. The panel discussion that followed hosted other presentations by prominent speakers, such as Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zulkifli Hassan (Deputy Rector of IIUM), Ustaz Fauwaz Fadzil Noor (shariah editor for the publishing house Telaga Biru), and Mr. Jufitri Joha (Malaysian Youth Council President). The conclusions reached by the discussants included: 1) measures and strategies for fighting extremism need to be holistic in their approach and