

The event was held to highlight the historical development of both countries and the contribution of Islamic scholars and religious leaders in the independence movements of the two countries — prominently the struggle of Sheikh Hasyim Asy'ari of Indonesia and Sheikh Abdullah Fahim of Malaysia.

The forum featured four leading panelists, namely Dato Dr. Mohd. Yusof Othman, Senior Fellow of the Islamic Institute of Hadhari UKM and Tun Abdullah Badawi's Legacy (LEGASI); Fahmi Amrullah Hadzik, grandson of Sheikh Hasyam Asy'ari (founder of Nahdhatul Ulama); Datuk Dr. Ahmad Murad Merican, Professor at the Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization Studies (ISTAC), IIUM; and Dr. Muhammad Hasan, the Deputy Rector of the State Islamic Religious Institute (IAIN) Madura, East Java, Indonesia.

The forum also witnessed the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the International Institute of Advanced Islamic Studies (IAIS) Malaysia and the Faculty of Law, Islamic University of Malang (UNISMA) Indonesia. The event was attended by a representative of Indonesia's Ambassador, Mr. Agus Badrul Jamal (Political Counselor), and Mrs. Nurriha Ahmad (Chief Assistant Secretary, Southeast Asia Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia), representing YB Dato' Saifuddin Abdullah.

**The Palestine - Kashmir Forum:
“The Struggle for Freedom and Self Determination”
Keynote Address by HE Madame Amna Baloch,
High Commissioner of Pakistan, Malaysia
(IAIS Malaysia, 14 October 2019)**

Wan Naim Wan Mansor

The recent revocation of Article 370 that safeguards the special status of Jammu and Kashmir, and the resurgence of right-wing Zionist factions in the Israeli parliament, are causing grave concern for the future of Kashmiris and Palestinians. Against this backdrop, an international forum was organised by IAIS Malaysia in collaboration with local and international organisations: the High Commission of Pakistan, Malaysian Consultative Council for Islamic Organisation (MAPIM), Secretariat for the Assembly of Ulama in Asia (SHURA), Alliance of World Mosques in Defence of Al-Aqsa, and Palestine Cultural Organization of Malaysia.

The event commenced with welcoming remark by Prof. Mohammad Hashim Kamali, IAIS Founding CEO, followed by a keynote speech by Her Excellency, Madame Amna Baloch, the High Commissioner of Pakistan to Malaysia. For the

forum, two introductory remarks were made, one by Mohamed Azam Mohamed Adil, IAIS Deputy CEO, and the second by Mohd Azmi Abdul Hamid, President of MAPIM. The first forum speaker, Muslim Imran, Director of the Palestine Cultural Organisation Malaysia, spoke in detail about the state of the Palestinian resistance and liberation movement since 1947 and the pressing issues currently facing it. The second panelist, His Excellency Mr. Atif Sharif Mian, Deputy Chief of Mission of the High Commission of Pakistan to Malaysia, shared the history of the Kashmiri conflict up until the recent controversial decision by Modi's government, which has attracted global condemnation.

The event ended with a joint Palestine-Kashmir Kuala Lumpur Declaration, signed by 13 organisations. Amongst other things the declaration demanded that all Indian troops withdraw from Kashmir and return the territory to normalcy while reinstating Article 370, and that the right of return be rendered unconditionally to all Palestinians and that all Palestinian detainees in Israeli jails be released.

**5th Annual Conference & Workshop “Education and Culture in
Promoting Harmony and National Integration”
Keynote address by Datuk Seri Dr Mujahid Yusof Rawa, Minister in
the Prime Minister’s Department
(IAIS Malaysia, 19 October 2019)**

Ahmad Badri Abdullah

On 19 October 2019, IAIS in collaboration with Harmony Malaysia, organised its 5th Annual Conference & Workshop under the theme: ‘Education and Culture in Promoting Harmony and National Integration’. The event was officiated by the Minister in the Prime Minister’s Department, Datuk Seri Dr. Mujahid Yusof Rawa. In his officiating speech, the Minister argued that economic development is not enough for a country without solid national integration and unity. Amid growing social disintegration in Malaysia, where prejudices and mistrust are rife, the Minister assured the audience that the new government aspired towards unity at all costs. Therefore, he argued, as the country is in dire need of a new narrative of Islam that should be a catalyst for unity, his ministry has become committed to promoting the compassionate aspects of the religion, coining the term *Rahmatan lil ‘Alamin* (blessing for the universe). The conference saw presentations by three prominent figures, Prof. Dato’ Teo Kok Seong, the Principle Research Fellow of the Institute of Ethnic Studies (KITA) UKM, Dr. Michael Jeyakumar Devaraj, chairperson for the Malaysian