

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ



**KENYATAAN MEDIA PERSATUAN PERUBATAN ISLAM MALAYSIA
/ ISLAMIC MEDICAL ASSOCIATION OF MALAYSIA (IMAM)
TOWARDS A SMOKE FREE MALAYSIA**

22nd October 2018

We refer to the statement of the Minister of Health, YB Datuk Seri Dzulkipli Ahmad: Cigarette prices to go up, minimum age to buy alcohol raised to 21.

We applaud his bravery, concern and care for the rakyat with his move to raise the prices of cigarettes and ban cigarette smoking in eateries.

As medical professionals we see daily the harm and tragedy accrued from cigarette smoking. Children develop respiratory illnesses because of parental smoking, become orphans from parental deaths due to lung cancer, the terrible and slow death that lung cancer afflicts and the daily sufferings of smokers whose every breath is a struggle. Not to mention the deaths and morbidity caused by strokes and heart disease strongly associated with smoking.

In our quest to build a new nation, the health of its rakyat must be a foremost objective. A healthy nation must be one of the pivotal end points of Malaysia Baru.

We are helmed by the exemplary, "*cakap serupa bikin*" habits of our doctors duo, Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamed and Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Wan Azizah Wan Ismail.

The FDA warns, "The overwhelming amount of death and disease attributable to tobacco is caused by addiction to cigarettes – the only legal consumer product that, when used as intended, will kill half of all long-term users. Unless we change course,

5.6 million young people alive today will die prematurely later in life from tobacco use".

<https://www.fda.gov/newsevents/newsroom/pressannouncements/ucm568923.htm>

Around 46% of adult males in Malaysia smoke. Smoking related diseases kill about 20,000 Malaysians annually.

Cigarette smoking is an addiction. It only gives a transient high which needs repeating over and over again to be sustained.

That "smoking is haram", a fatwa (edict) issued by the National Fatwa Council(NFC) in 1995 is not being seriously taken by Muslims. If anything, there has been concerted efforts by the tobacco industry to promote the view that smoking is Makruh (objectionable but not forbidden) and many have fallen for this.

We urge our Muslim brethren to abide by the NFC fatwa derived by our learned scholars with input from the medical fraternity.

We are puzzled that there were quarters who questioned the banning of smoking in the Parliament. If the most august seat of the Government cannot enforce this in Malaysia Baru, among the Yang Berhormat, then it is certainly a bad example for the ordinary rakyat!

The health fraternity must also address the addictive nature of cigarette smoking. Many smokers have tried to quit smoking at some point in their lives.

Therefore, a holistic public health approach should include dedicated addiction treatment clinics. More sophisticated evidence based medical and psycho-social support should be readily accessible to these smoking addicts to kick their habit.

Kudos to the honourable Minister, Ministry of Health, medical professional organisations and anti-smoking activists in our joint quest to make Malaysia Baru SMOKE FREE!

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