



26.10.07  
FRIDAY

## Gülen's Contribution to a Middle Way Islam in Southeast Asia

by *Muhammad Nawab Osman*

**Panel:**  
The Gülen Movement in  
the Muslim World 1

**Venue:**  
B202,  
Brunei Gallery, SOAS

| 26.10.07<br>Panels | Parallel<br>Session 1 | Parallel<br>Session 2 |
|--------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 9:30-11:30         |                       |                       |
| 13:00-15:00        |                       |                       |
| 15:10-17:00        |                       | Presentation<br>09    |

This paper aims to demonstrate the relevance of the Gülen movement as a counter to extremist ideology and an encouragement to inter-religious dialogue in the Southeast Asia region. The movement presents a Middle Way Islam, which can accommodate local cultural differences and make a hospitable space for positive relations between Muslims and non-Muslims.

Following an account of Fethullah Gülen's views on extremism and inter-religious dialogue, the paper turns to case studies of Gülen-inspired organisations in Singapore and Indonesia to show how they have applied his ideas to enable inter-religious dialogue and offer an effective alternative to legalistic teaching of Islam. The case studies allow for comparison of the movement's approach to a Muslim-majority and Muslim-minority context. The paper concludes by charting the trajectory of the movement's role and contribution to the development of a Middle Way Islam in Southeast Asia.

The paper is based on a combination of fieldwork with a qualitative approach and documentary research. The fieldwork comprises data gathered through participatory observation in Singapore and interviews with key members of the two organisations and their local partners. The documentary research comprises data from the movement's publications – books, magazines (*Asya Pasifik*), newspaper articles, brochures and online materials.

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