

'Counter false news on Islam'

DAKWAH: Muslim media practitioners can clear misperceptions on Internet and social media, says Chamil Wariya

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MUSLIM media practitioners, including journalists and bloggers, have been urged to play a more important role in *dakwah* (preaching of Islam) to counter false information on Islam.

Malaysian Press Institute chief executive officer Datuk Chamil Wariya said Islam had now come under siege from misperceptions spread on the Internet and the social media by Muslims claiming to be religious experts. This had also given rise to dissensions among the Muslims.

"Now, there are too many young Muslims claiming to be Islamic intellectuals. Despite not having the knowledge or passing the stringent selection process to become an ulama, they claim that they can bring about changes that can lead to the rise of Islam.

"Their shallow knowledge of Islam and clashes in opinions will only lead to religious crisis

and the spread of lies and division among the ummah," said Chamil when opening a Media and Dakwah seminar at Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia's Leadership and Management Faculty yesterday.

He said Muslim media practitioners sat in a unique position between the ulama and the people, and they were needed to step in to counter the extreme differences in opinion about the religion.

He urged them to highlight the importance of the National Fatwa Council in any cases concerning Islam.

"All differences in opinion about Islam must be forwarded and settled at the council, instead of discussing them in the open by ulamas. Complex issues must be debated at council level and its outcomes announced."

However, he said there were certain issues that could be debated by ulamas within a controlled platform organised by Muslim media practitioners.

Chamil cautioned that the freedom of speech by ulamas must be safeguarded.