

# Religious tolerance needed to counter extremism

ONCE again, the whole world had to watch another incident of terrorism.

This time in Paris, France, where masked gunmen stormed the Paris office of a satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo's last Wednesday, killing 12 people before escaping.

The incident has been labelled as the deadliest attack in France in 40 years.

According to several news reports, while the police have yet to determine the motives of the attackers, an amateur video showed at least one of the culprits shouting "Allahu Akbar", Arabic for "God is Great" after the attack, and saying they had "avenged for Prophet Muhammad".

It has also been reported that

despite being taken to court under anti-racism laws, the newspaper continued to publish controversial cartoons of the Prophet.

However, it is crucial for us to know that despite the sensitive nature of Charlie Hebdo's controversial cartoons on Islam, it cannot be used as a reason to justify last Wednesday's multiple killings.

Any act of extremism is no way to protect the religion.

Any acts of violence, especially those perpetuated in the name of religion, should be stopped and condemned.

For whatever motive the assailants might have against the victims, the recent incident which occurred in Paris also provides another picture to us on the issue

of "religious tolerance".

It's time for all people to accept the fact that we are living in a world that is full of people from different religions, beliefs, races, and cultural backgrounds.

As such, mutual respect and religious tolerance is needed to deal with all the differences we have.

Understanding religious beliefs other than one's own is a key element of tolerance, since faith traditions often define a significant part of a person's identity.

Without having such understanding, hatred can easily arise and any uncivilised act can easily take place regardless of time and place.

If the human race is going to sur-

vive into the next century without destroying itself in a religiously triggered war, then we are going to have to get along with other faith groups within the religion as well as with people of other religions.

The best way to promote this is to spread accurate information about other religions, so that people will have a clear understanding of those with different faiths.

Thus, this should be our main goal in creating a more harmonious society where everybody can live peacefully and without having to go through any act of violence and hatred.

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