



**Closed-Door Roundtable Discussion  
on  
Issues Impacting the Malay Community in Singapore  
Session Seven: Enhancing Engagement with Malay-Muslim Civil Society  
Actors**

Tuesday, 23 April 2024

Conference Room, Level 1  
Oei Tiong Ham Building  
Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy  
National University of Singapore (*Bukit Timah Campus*)

**PROGRAMME**

2.45 pm – 3.00 pm

**Registration**

3.00 pm – 3.05 pm

**Welcome and Introduction**

Dr Carol Soon  
Principal Research Fellow and  
Head, Society and Culture Department  
Institute of Policy Studies

3.05 pm – 3.45 pm

**Presentations**

**Moderator**

Mr Shamil Zainuddin  
Research Associate  
Social Lab  
Institute of Policy Studies

**Speaker**

Dr Walid Jumblatt Abdullah  
Assistant Chair (Students) and  
Assistant Professor  
School of Social Sciences  
Nanyang Technological University

**Discussant**

Mr Mohamed Imran Mohamed Taib  
Founder & Executive Director  
Dialogue Centre and  
Founder  
Centre for Interfaith Understanding

3.45 pm – 5.00 pm

### Discussion

- What current engagement models between government bodies and Malay-Muslim civil society actors in Singapore have been successful, and what lessons can be drawn from these examples?
- How can the government collaborate with Malay-Muslim civil society actors more effectively to address community needs and enhance societal resilience, considering the secular and diverse nature of Singapore's society?

5.00 pm – 5.15 pm

### Summary Remarks

5.15 pm

### End

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## SYNOPSIS

This roundtable discussion explores practical strategies for government and policymakers to enhance engagement with Malay-Muslim civil society actors in Singapore. Given the diverse and active participation of the Malay-Muslim community in civil society initiatives, including interfaith dialogues, grassroots activism and social media initiatives that actively discuss community issues, there is a significant opportunity to deepen collaborative efforts. This roundtable discussion seeks to examine the dynamics of current engagements, identify strengths and lessons learnt, and propose areas for improvement. The focus will be on practical measures that can facilitate more meaningful interactions between government bodies and Muslim social actors, so as to leverage these relationships for mutual benefit and the broader goal of strengthening national cohesion and inclusive social development.

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

**MOHAMED IMRAN Mohamed Taib** is an advocate for diversity and an interfaith facilitator. He has over two decades of experience writing and researching on issues surrounding multiculturalism and interreligious relations in Singapore. He has more than a dozen articles and chapters published in local and international newspapers, journals and books. Mr Mohamed Imran has delivered guest lectures at universities, government agencies, multinational corporations and non-governmental organisations in Singapore, Southeast Asia and internationally. He has also co-edited and published books on Malay society, Islam, interfaith relations and multiculturalism — the latest as co-author of *Remembering Singapore River*, a heritage book on communities, lives and leisure surrounding the historic river. After spending close to 20 years in government service, he ventured into the NGO sector in 2019 and established the Centre for Interfaith Understanding, one of Singapore's leading interfaith organisations that is inclusive and progressive in its approach. Three years later, he started a consultancy and training outfit called Dialogue Centre Limited. Mr Mohamed Imran is a graduate in Philosophy from Birkbeck College, University of London.

**SHAMIL Zainuddin** is a Research Associate at the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS). He specialises in applied ethnography and has a Master in Social Science (Sociology) from the National University of Singapore. Of all the awards he has received, he is most proud of his 2005 Ministry of Home Affairs National Day Award, which acknowledged his efforts as an SCDF rescuer in tsunami-ravaged Aceh, Indonesia.

Mr Shamil's research focuses on marginalised groups, and he addresses critical issues like racial discrimination at the workplace, labour precarity and poverty. He has been pivotal in projects that have influenced policy changes. His ongoing work with the ethnography team at IPS on platform workers in Singapore helped inform new protections for this group of workers. He has also worked with organisations like Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura and Yayasan MENDAKI to evaluate and redesign their flagship programs, like the Empowerment Partnership Scheme and KelasMatemaika, respectively.

Beyond research, Mr Shamil actively shares his insights as a speaker, a commentary writer and workshop facilitator, tackling subjects ranging from workplace racism and xenophobia to the gig economy. An active volunteer with Beyond Social Services since 2013, he is also the co-founder of the currently on hiatus Kopitiam Lengkok Bahru group. The group uses photography to document the lives of youth living in rental housing. Through his diverse roles, Mr Shamil remains focused on his core mission: Making every day easier for those who live more difficult lives.

**Carol SOON** is Principal Research Fellow at the Institute of Policy Studies where she heads the Society and Culture department. She has a PhD in Communications and New Media from the National University of Singapore (NUS). Dr Soon is also Adjunct Principal Scientist at the Centre for Advanced Technologies in Online Safety at the Institute of High Performance Computing (A\*STAR) and Principal Investigator at NUS Centre for Trusted Internet and Community. Her research interests are in false information, online safety, digital literacy and inclusion, media regulation, new media and activism, and public engagement and deliberation. She has published her research in books and peer-reviewed journals such as the *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, *Asian Journal of Communication* and *Public Integrity*. She worked with the Ministry of Health in 2017 on Singapore's first citizens' jury and is currently working with various government agencies on engaging citizens in co-creating policy solutions.

**WALID JUMBLATT Abdullah** received his PhD under a joint degree programme between National University of Singapore and King's College London. He works on state-Islam relations, and political parties and elections, with particular focus on Singapore and Malaysia. He has published articles in internationally peer-reviewed journals such as *Democratization*, *International Political Science Review*, *Government and Opposition*, *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, *Asian Survey*, *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, *Journal of Church and State*, among others. He is the author of *Islam in a Secular State: Muslim Activism in Singapore* and the host of "Teh Tarik with Walid", an Instagram Live show which discusses Singapore politics.

**\*Due to limited space, registration is on a first-come, first-served basis.**

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