The ruling party in Malaysia, the United Malays’ National Organisation (UMNO), has set up a website to demonstrate its various jihad efforts. The mere act of creating such a website – regardless of its content – reveals much about the competition for ‘being Islam-ic’ in Malaysia these days. Since it is primarily politi- cal parties that stage the protagonists in this competition, Islamization in Malaysia has become a highly political issue rather than a direct outcome of Islamic social movements. UMNO and PAS, the Islamic Party, oppose each other vehemently.

There is an underlying societal demand for stronger Islam – regardless of its content – which has been opposed by the Malay dominated majority. A discussion of the UMNO party, which has set up a website to demonstrate its various Jihad efforts, reveals much about the competition for ‘being Islam-ic’ in Malaysia these days. Since it is primarily political parties that stage the protagonists in this competition, Islamization in Malaysia has become a highly political issue rather than a direct outcome of Islamic social movements.

Regional Issues

POLITICIZING ISLAM

Claudia Derichs

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