

ANNEX A

THE FATWA COMMITTEE AND ITS ROLE

The task of issuing fatwas and role of the Mufti are becoming increasingly important in today's rapidly changing world. As the task requires expertise and a broad understanding of various disciplines, many countries adopt the concept of collective fatwa by forming a Fatwa committee to assist the Mufti in the process of fatwa deliberation. The committee also ensures that fatwa is deliberated comprehensively. Members of the Fatwa Committee and the Mufti complement one another in executing the task of issuing fatwas. In Singapore, this Committee consists of:

- The Mufti as the Chairperson
- Two qualified members who are also members of the MUIS Council
- No more than six independent ulama, who are not from among the members of MUIS Council

In Singapore, the appointment of a mufti and the establishment of the Fatwa Committee is formalised through the Administration of Muslim Law Act (AMLA). The President of the Republic of Singapore appoints all members in the Fatwa Committee on the advice of MUIS, and the appointment is notified in the Government Gazette.

Since 1990, the Fatwa Committee has expanded its membership by appointing local religious teachers and ulama as associate members to participate in the Fatwa Committee deliberations. Beyond enriching the fatwa discussion, the associate membership also serves as a platform for training, exposure and opportunity for younger religious graduates who may serve the Fatwa Committee in the future.

The Office of the Mufti performs the function of the Fatwa Secretariat to support the Mufti and the Fatwa Committee. Prior to the establishment of the Secretariat, each member of the Fatwa Committee was required to conduct individual research on the fatwa. Research for each issue is now managed by officers from the Office of the Mufti, since the setting up of Fatwa Secretariat. The Office of the Mufti is also responsible for helping Mufti to issue irsyad (i.e., religious guidance) that does not require a fatwa.