



## Invitation

Tuesday, June 18th, 2013, 6 pm

# Pluralistic Challenges in Politics, Culture and Religion: What Next After Elections in Malaysia and Pakistan?

### Venue

Zentrum für Literatur- und Kulturforschung

Schützenstr. 18  
10117 Berlin

Room 308

### Discussion with Farish Noor and Dietrich Reetz

On May 5 and 11, 2013, two Asian countries held elections that were widely watched not only by their neighbours in the region, but also by the global community, foreign policy experts and academics alike: Malaysia and Pakistan. The reason was not only that the political survival of their governments was at stake, but also the nature and direction of their internal as well as external policies. Before the elections internal and external pressures had been building up to accommodate and embrace the democratic process in the fullest possible manner unseen by either country. Where in Malaysia the question was if for the first time since independence the ruling coalition would be replaced by the opposition, in Pakistan the major achievement was seen in the uninterrupted continuation of the political process which had been disrupted by military rule in the past. In both countries new and vibrant opposition forces had managed to mobilise a new generation of young citizens no longer content with the way their countries were governed and ready to take charge of their own destinies. At the same time both countries were struggling with the challenges cultural and religious pluralities posed to the political process, in Malaysia the cohabitation of the Malay Muslim majority with citizens of non-Muslim Chinese and Indian descent, in Pakistan the conflictual co-existence of its four provinces with its manifold sectarian cleavages within and also outside Islam that turned increasingly violent. Both elections were also eagerly watched by their neighbours where Malaysia faced the opportunity and challenge to build bridges in South East Asia and with China, and Pakistan with its nuclear potential exerted itself on the conflictual relationship with Afghanistan and India.

Farish Noor and Dietrich Reetz will discuss the conduct and consequences of these elections, while highlighting the structural similarities and differences.

**Dr. Farish A. Noor** is a Malaysian political scientist and Associate Professor at the S Rajaratnam School of International Studies RSIS, Nanyang Technological University Singapore, where he also heads the research cluster on Religious Politics in Southeast Asia. Prior to being based in Singapore he was a researcher at the ZMO between 2001 to 2007 where he worked with Dietrich Reetz on a number of projects including the Transnational Transfer of Religious Education between South and South East Asia. His recent book is *Islam on the Move: The Tablighi Jama'at Movement in Southeast Asia* (Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam, 2012).

**PD Dr. Dietrich Reetz** is a political scientist and Privatdozent at Zentrum Moderner Orient and Free University Berlin, where he had pursued research and teaching on Muslim South Asia and Pakistan in particular, but also on Muslim Global networks which had emerged from the region, such as Deobandi and Tablighi networks. He published *Islam in the Public Sphere: Religious Groups in India, 1900-1947* (Oxford University Press, Delhi, 2006).

GEFÖRDERT VOM



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