

Biography: Tun Hussein Onn



Tun Hussein Onn
12 February 1922 - 29 May 1990

Tun Hussein bin Dato' Onn was Chairman of ISIS from April 1984 till May 1990. He accepted the appointment a few years after his resignation as Malaysia's third Prime Minister (1976 to 1981).

After his Prime Ministership, Tun Hussein continued to contribute to welfare organizations. He was instrumental in the setting up of the Tun Hussein Onn Eye Hospital. He was also an advisor to Petronas, the country's oil corporation.

Tun Hussein Onn was looked upon as being very sincere in his struggle for racial unity and had a reputation for being firm against anyone who tried to create racial unrest in the county and it was due to this, that he was known as 'Father of Unity'.

Born in Johor Bahru, Johor on February 12, 1922 to Dato Onn Jaafar and Datin Halimah Hussein, Tun Hussein received his early education in Singapore and at the English College in Johor Bahru.

After leaving school, he joined the Johor Military Forces as a cadet in 1940 and was sent a year later to the Indian Military Academy in Dehra Dun, India. Upon completion of his training, he was absorbed into the Indian Army and served in the Middle East when the Second World War broke out. His vast experience prompted the British to employ him as an instructor at the Malayan Police Recruiting and Training Centre in Rawalpindi after the war.

Prior to entering politics, Tun Hussein studied law in London, qualifying as a Barrister-at-Law and setting up legal practice in Malaysia.

Tun Hussein was renowned for stressing the issue of unity through policies aimed at rectifying economic imbalances between the different communities in Malaysia. For instance, April 20, 1981 saw the National Unit Trust Scheme being launched. He also gave serious consideration to the concept of Rukun Tetangga and the war against the drug menace.

Tun Hussein, who was married to Toh Puan Suhaila Tan Sri Haji Mohd Noah, underwent a coronary bypass in early 1981. On July 17 the same year, he stepped down as Prime Minister and retired from active politics due to health concerns. He passed away on May 29, 1990 at the age of 68.