

**Rayappan case: Nazri explains why government interfered**  
**Malaysiakini.com**  
**April 10, 2007**  
**Yoges Palaniappan**

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Mohd Nazri Abdul Aziz today dismissed the allegation that there was too much political interference in the Rayappan Anthony saga.

The minister said this in response to Salahuddin Ayub (PAS-Kubang Kerian) who claimed that the government had intervened too much in the matter.

The opposition leader also asked why Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and the cabinet had instructed attorney-general Abdul Gani Patail to decide on the late Rayappan's religious status.

Rayappan, 71, died at Hospital Kuala Lumpur on Nov 29, but religious authorities stopped his family from claiming the body the following day on the ground that he was a Muslim.

An ex-parte order to bury Rayappan as a Muslim was also obtained from the Shah Alam Syariah High Court on Dec 1.

On Dec 8, two days after the premier ordered the AG to determine the religious status of Rayappan, the religious authorities dropped the matter.

**Additional facts**

Meanwhile, Nazri said the cabinet considered all the factors involved before instructing the AG to intervene.

"Among the factors was to get a speedy result without sidelining any laws," he told the Dewan Rakyat.

The religious authorities' decision to withdraw the claim was based on the additional facts gathered later such as Rayappan being more inclined towards a non-Muslim lifestyle.

Nazri also explained that both Rayappan's identity card and a letter written by him to the National Registration Department stating that he is no longer a Muslim proved that he was not practising the faith.

His passport also showed that he was not a Muslim, he added.

"Since all evidence clearly showed that he was not a Muslim, we had no reason to bring the matter to the courts," he said.

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.  
Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/65754>