

Nazri: No hasty decisions on religious disputes
Malaysiakini.com
April 18, 2007
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The government will not be pressured by opposition parties into making hasty decisions on the sensitive issue of religious disputes, the Dewan Rakyat was told today.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Mohd Nazri Abdul Aziz said the Attorney-General's Chambers has been instructed to study this matter with utmost concern and care in order to find an amicable solution.

"The government is always ready to discuss this issue with various parties, including non-governmental organisations related to religion," he added in a written reply.

He said Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi believes that the majority of citizens are matured and can understand the sensitivity of this issue.

"The government does not want to make hasty decisions due to pressure from opposition parties that want to use this for their political interests," he added.

Nazri was responding to M Kulasegaran (DAP-Ipoh Barat) who asked the prime minister to state how he intends to convince the people over this issue and the submission of a memorandum by 10 non-Muslim ministers last year.

Court decisions

The minister also said that the public must comply with court decisions pertaining to the issue of religion.

"All citizens have the freedom of worship and for some specific cases brought to the courts, decisions are made after considering all the evidence," he added.

The public must accept these decisions and controversies should not arise, he said.

However, he noted that certain sensitive issues such as the burial of a person whose religious status is being debated can lead to controversies.

On the memorandum sent by the ministers, he said the issue has been resolved.

"As told by the prime minister many times (before), all the ministers have agreed to withdraw the memorandum and use an already present channel to discuss such matters," he added.

He said raising this issue in Parliament was merely a ploy by the opposition.

On Jan 20 last year, the ministers submitted a memorandum to Abdullah to protect the rights of religious minorities. The memorandum was later withdrawn.