

X'mas directive: Likely overzealous officers' fault
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The Christian Federation of Malaysia (CFM) has confirmed that it never received any official directive from the Prime Minister's Office to remove crucifixes from the Christmas event attended by Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak on Dec 25.

"The CFM received no written directive. I am not aware of any such directive given by the Prime Minister's Office," said CFM executive secretary Tan Kong Beng, who when contacted today added that communications with the Prime Minister's Office normally go through him.

Kuala Lumpur Archbishop Murphy Pakiam (left), who had hosted the annual social event in the compounds of his resident last Christmas, was however unavailable for comment.

Sources at Prime Minister's Office, too, claim that there had been no official directive, and that if anything, the 'orders' were likely made by "overzealous officers" without Najib's knowledge.

"Even (United States) President Obama would have problems controlling the personal skews of his officers no matter how good or competent the officers may be," a source said, adding that prolonging the matter would only add to the fissures in society.

PM's Office: No comment

The Prime Minister's Office has apparently officially chosen to keep lips sealed on this matter.

Contacted for an official response today, the office's media advisor Jalaluddin Bahaudin said: "I don't want to comment on this matter".

Yesterday, Seputeh parliamentarian Teresa Kok demanded that Najib apologise for his office's directive, saying that he was an ungracious guest and was disrespectful to Christianity.

It is understood that no hymns or prayers took place at the event but Tan said that this is normal as it is a social event and not a religious one.

The event was attended by the prime minister, government representatives, religious leaders, community leaders and politicians from both sides of the divide.

