

**Cops probing daily over Christian plot: Hisham**  
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The police have received nine reports against a newspaper on its claim that a group of Christian leaders wanted Christianity to be the country's official religion.

Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein said four of the reports were from Penang, Alor Setar (two), and Kuantan, Ipoh and Sepang, Selangor (one each).

He said investigations into the allegation would be carried out thoroughly as directed by Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak.

"Our focus is to investigate whether there was any truth in the report and on the newspaper's (Utusan Malaysia) decision to play up a sensitive issue," he said in a statement today.

Utusan Malaysia carried a front report on Saturday quoting two blogs which claimed that a meeting had taken place in Penang, attended by Christian leaders who wanted Christianity to be an official religion of Malaysia.

Hishammuddin said the report was very sensitive and all quarters should know that it was not wise to raise such matter for it could lead to chaos and anxieties among the people.

"At this stage, we still could not make any conclusion or accuse any quarters based on the newspaper report.

"The prime minister, in response to the media yesterday, called on all quarters to remain calm and not to exploit the allegation for it will not benefit anybody," said Hishammuddin.

He said the quagmire called for media practitioners to be more sensitive and responsible, more so in a plural society like Malaysia.

It is important for media practitioners to understand how important it is for values and sensitivity on religious and racial issues to be given utmost consideration before publishing any report, he added.

Hishammuddin said the police investigation would take into account all aspects and possibilities, including the differences on what transpired according to those involved and the newspaper's report.

"I want the police to get an accurate and authentic information on what had actually happened and it should be transparent and firm," he said, adding that Malaysia abided by the constitution which spells out that Islam is the official religion while ensuring freedom for other religions to be practised.

**Jakim not empowered to probe**

Meanwhile, the Islamic Development Department (Jakim) is not empowered to probe a claim by a newspaper and two bloggers over the matter.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Jamil Khir Baharom said instead, matters related to other religions came under the ambit of security authorities, including the police.

"Jakim only looks after on Islamic affairs, not other religions. Issues on religious conversion come under security authorities.

"Jakim has no rights to be angry... let the police investigate the claim," he told reporters after receiving 10 lecturers from Al-Azhar University, who will teach in Malaysia, at his office in Putrajaya today.

Meanwhile, Jamil Khir said he was still considering a candidate to replace the late Ilani Isahak as chairman of the National Interfaith Committee.

Ilani died of breast cancer at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Hospital in February.

- Bernama

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