

Non-Muslim affairs ministry sought at PM-Christians meet
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In his second luncheon with the Christian leaders since last May, Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak was today asked again to set up a ministry to handle the affairs of the non-Muslim community.

According to sources who attended the luncheon at Putrajaya, the proposal was made during an “animated” conversation.

“It was a cordial and an animated discussion,” said a Christian leader when contacted, adding that he would not reveal more about the private conversation.

The source added the event was attended by “about half of the cabinet” including Deputy Premier Muhyiddin Yassin, Minister in the Prime Minister’s Department Koh Tsu Koon and International Trade and Investment Minister Mustapa Muhamad.

Representing the churches were Bishop Ng Moon Hing, Reverend Eu Hong Seng, Bishop Thomas Tsen, Archbishop Murphy Pakiam (left in photo), Bishop Hwa Yung and Bishop Bolly Lapok.

The event was used by the leaders, who represented churches in the peninsular, and Sabah and Sarawak, to air frustrations over several issues faced by Christians last year.

These included red tape and apparent shifting of regulations faced by churches throughout the country.

The leaders also lamented that the nation’s leaders appeared out of touch with the community, particularly when they kept silent when the community was “attacked”.

They also aired disappointment over the government-owned media and those linked to the ruling coalition which have taken an adverse stance against the Christian community.

Najib was also reminded to respect the High Court’s decision on the use of the word “Allah” by the Christian publication, the Herald, and to use this to inform their policies and directives.

The meeting with Christian leaders comes scarcely a month after calls were made for Reverend Eu to be charged with sedition over his questioning on the implementation of Article 153.

In 2011, the community faced investigations for allegedly trying to turn Malaysia into a Christian nation, and allegedly proselytising to Muslims.