

PAS passes buck to Home Ministry over 'Allah' row
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By Ahmad Fadli KC

PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang today brushed aside questions on whether the use of the term 'Allah' should be allowed in the Malay version of the Bible, stressing that it was the Home Ministry's prerogative and not the party.

"This question should be posed to the home minister. The decision lies with them. We don't decide. We have yet to rule (Putrajaya)," said Abdul Hadi at a press conference in Shah Alam today.

Abdul Hadi said this when asked to comment on the PAS syura council's position that non-Muslims should not be allowed to use the term. The council, made up of Islamic scholars, can overrule the party's central committee on policy matters.

Prior to the council's decision, Abdul Hadi (right) had announced that the central committee's position was that non-Muslims can use the term, provided that it was not abused.

This position was shared by the Pakatan Rakyat's leadership.

Some Christians argue that the many indigenous groups have been using the term to describe God in a Christian context for decades, just as their Middle-Eastern and Indonesian counterparts had for centuries.

However, the federal government had banned the use of the term, causing disquiet among the Christians, particularly in Sabah and Sarawak where the Malay version of the Bible is most widely used.

Karpal peeved at NST

Abdul Hadi claimed that PAS was being dragged into the debate, despite the fact that the key party to the issue was the Home Ministry.

"So why drag us into this discussion?" he asked.

In a related development, DAP chairperson Karpal Singh said that he did not attend a meeting with PAS spiritual leader Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat to discuss the issue, as reported by the New Straits Times on Feb 3.

In a press release today, Karpal (right in pic) said he had contacted a New Straits Times reporter to clarify matters, but no retraction was forthcoming.

"I must state with the force at my command that there has been no meeting whatsoever at a hotel in Penang between Nik Aziz and the DAP leadership at any time.

"Consequently, the question of Nik Aziz having explained the matter, and the syura council's decision to the DAP and the issue having been settled cannot arise.

"It is regretted that the New Straits Times has repeatedly chosen to report news that do not have any basis or justification, and declined to place into effect the correction as requested," he said.

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