

MIC also 'shocked' at conversion law amendment

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MIC has echoed its BN partner MCA in expressing "shock" over the bill related to child conversion laws, saying it is "unacceptable" and that they had not been consulted on the matter.

MIC national treasurer Jaspal Singh's was responding to the Administration of the Religion of Islam Bill (Federal Territories) Bill 2013 tabled on Wednesday.

muslim islam malays 250806 joyful "This (amendment) is a most dangerous, subversive and anti-constitutional clause that has somehow been inserted into the Bill.

"Clearly there was not a process of consultation with all relevant parties; otherwise we would have pointed out the unfairness of this particular clause," he said in a statement today.

He said it was "against natural justice" to convert a minor, with or without the consent of the parents.

"This clause is totally unacceptable and cannot be allowed to be enacted into law. If any one parent converts, then the children should still not be converted without the consent of both parents. It is against natural justice to do otherwise."

'Open to abuse'

Jaspal said the law could be abused by angry spouses to convert a child as a form of revenge.

NONE "Conversion could also be done to unfairly gain custody of the children, because surely the Syariah Court will grant custody to the Muslim parent," he added.

Jaspal said that children who wished to change their religion on their own volition could do so after eighteen years of age.

"Children should not be converted at all," he added.

"I call on the government to withdraw the Bill immediately and consult with all

stakeholders before tabling it again.”

All round rejection

Yesterday, MCA vice president Gan Ping Sieu said the tabling of the bill would impinge on the rights of non-Muslims, and called it a “terrible disservice” to Prime Minister Najib Razak’s call for “national reconciliation” after the general election.

Today, MCA central committee member Loh Seng Kok chimed in calling on all seven MCA parliamentarians to reject the Bill, and to encourage MPs from other political parties to do the same.

The cabinet in April 2009 declared that both parents were required in the conversion of minors.

The amendment, which seeks to loosen the term 'parent' so that consent from one parent would suffice, has thus been criticised as being in direct conflict with the cabinet's directive.

Malaysian Bar Council president Christopher Leong also argued this week that the amendment was “unconstitutional” on the grounds that the federal constitution provides that such words in contention refer to the plural.

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