

**Minister: Gov't not targeting PAS with Shiite ban**

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**By Ahmad Fadli KC**

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Jamil Khir Baharom has denied that the government is making PAS a political target by banning Shiite teachings.

NONE"“For the government, it is not about the party, it is (about) a teaching which the government decided is not part of the Sunnah Wal Jamaah that is practiced in Malaysia,” Jamil Khir (right, in photo) told reporter in Kuala Lumpur today.

He was asked if the government has a record of the number of Shiite followers in the country based on political parties.

The Islamic party had yesterday issued a statement asserting that its members have no links to the banned teachings.

He also stressed that the ban on the teachings is akin to that of other religions in the country in that while they are allowed to be practiced, they are not allowed to be spread to followers of Islam.

"If someone wants to practice Christianity, Hindusim, no one will intervene, even (if) the Iranians want to practice Shiite.

"We in Malaysia follow the Sunnah Wal Jamaah. The spread of anything else we do not allow. It (Shiite) is not a denomination," he said.

Yesterday, Berita Harian reported that several foreign students were spreading Shiite teachings in four public universities and that they were linked with plots to overthrow the federal government.

The daily had previously claimed that senior PAS leaders were also influenced by Shiite teachings as a result of their interest in revolutionary movements in the Middle East, in particular Iran.

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