

## **Friday sermon says 'Allah' owned by Muslims**

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Allowing non-Muslims to use the word 'Allah' would amount to ceding the rights and sovereignty of Muslims, according to a Friday sermon issued by the Selangor Islamic Affairs Department (Jais) yesterday.

"To those who want to understand this issue, they need to realise that some religious terms have been 'owned' by Muslims and any move to use it could be considered an abuse and disrespect towards Islam," said the sermon as read out by Selangor State Mosque imam Khairul Anuar Mulim and quoted in Sinar Harian today.

He reportedly added that it would be detrimental for Islam if followers of other religions are allowed to 'abuse' the word.

"Let us stop and think, how would we feel if non-Muslims name or put signage on their place of worship 'House of Allah'?"

"Given that, shouldn't we be concerned that our children would think that there is no difference between Islam and other religions?" he said.

**Ban on 'Allah'**

The row over the use of the word 'Allah' erupted when Christians used it as the Malay translation for God, particularly in bibles.

Shortly before the Sarawak state election, the cabinet had agreed to the guidelines which allowed the free use of Malay bibles containing the word 'Allah' in Sabah and Sarawak while peninsula required a stamp 'For Christians only' and a cross on the cover of the bibles.

However, debate was sparked again last month when Kedah Menteri Besar Mukhriz Mahathir declared that non-Muslims in his state are not allowed to use the word 'Allah'.

There is also a related court case pending at the Court of Appeal, where the Catholic Church is applying to strike out the government's appeal against a 2009 High Court decision to allow the Christian publication to use the word 'Allah' on grounds that the ban is unconstitutional.

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