

## **Guan Eng slams Muhyiddin for backing church protest**

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In the wake of the sudden raid on the Bible Society of Malaysia by the Selangor Islamic Affairs Department (Jais), Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan has condemned the BN for trying to force Islamic law on non-Muslims.

Lim said Deputy Prime Minister Muhyidin Yassin has shown "provocative support" for Umno Selangor's proposed demonstrations outside Catholic churches in the state on Sunday to prevent non-Muslims from using the word "Allah".

"Muhyidin is fanning the fire of religious hatred by agreeing with Selangor Umno's threat to demonstrate outside Catholic churches on Sunday unless Herald editor Father Lawrence Andrew retracts his statement and apologises for the use of the word "Allah" by Christians in the state in their Bahasa Malaysia masses," Lim said in a statement today.

"Never before has a governing political party been sanctioned to demonstrate outside a religious place of worship and our first three prime ministers of Malaysia would have reacted with utter horror at such an uncivilised act," added Lim, who is also DAP secretary-general.

He said Muhyiddin was behaving "recklessly for political gain and was irresponsible" in stating that Umno Selangor was acting on its own and within its lawful right to demonstrate outside Catholic churches on Sunday.

Damaging assiduously built harmony

Such "hostile acts", he said, would damage interfaith relations and destroy the religious harmony assiduously built up in Malaysia by the various communities since Merdeka in 1957.

"Why is it okay to demonstrate against Catholic churches but not against price hikes of sugar, petrol, power tariffs and highway tolls imposed by the BN?" Lim asked.

"Such demonstrations by a racist anti non-Malay and anti non-Muslim Umno will irreparably harm the harmonious relations in our multi-racial society, which have existed peacefully until Umno stirred up the Allah controversy," Lim added.

Lim went on to say that the Jais raid on BSM's premises, where hundreds of copies of the Bible in Malay were confiscated was "completely unacceptable".

The Islamic authorities, he said, do not have the authority in law to enter the premises of non-Muslim religious establishments for inspection, search or raid, unless it is related to an attempt to propagate non-Islamic religions to Muslims.

In the raid yesterday, Jais had seized more than 300 copies of the Bible in the Malay and Iban languages, without a search warrant or authorisation and it also detained BSM president Lee Min Choon (left) and BSM manager Sinclair Wong.

Lim described the incident as "a dangerous and wrongful extension of Jais powers over non-Muslims that will be seen as an unprecedented attack and erosion of the fundamental right of freedom of religion as enshrined under the Federal Constitution".

The DAP, he added, does not agree with the application of Islamic laws on non-Muslims.

"The great irony is that BN and Umno have been warning non-Muslims about the dangers of PAS imposing Islamic laws on non-Muslims, and yet BN has shown its true colours of hypocrisy and double-standard by using force and compulsion against non-Muslims in exactly what they had accused others of doing," said Lim.

Lim supported BSM's call to the Christian community to remain calm and not engage in any provocative acts.

"The Christian community must remain calm even if Umno Selangor continues to bully and humiliate them by carrying out its wild and dangerous demonstrations in front of Catholic churches on Sundays."

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