

Selangor Umno defies ban on Klang 'Allah' protest

MalaysiaKini.com

Jan 5, 2014

Selangor Umno members attended the rally against the Christians' use of 'Allah' this morning in Klang, despite party orders to stay away.

The rally, originally planned in front of the Lady of Lourdes Church to protest The Herald editor father Lawrence Andrew for calling on Christians to continue using the word 'Allah' in their Malay prayers, was moved to a field nearby after a backlash from critics.

About 100 people - comprising members of Gerakan Masyarakat Prihatin, Jati, Isma and Pekida Meru division along with Umno Selangor members - turned up at Sultan Sulaiman Club field to call on Andrew to apologise over his statement.

Kapar Umno deputy chief Saroni Judi who was present said he was worried that the use of 'Allah' by Christians would be abused.

"It is a cunning tactic. I urged Muslims out there who still don't understand (the problem), especially those with religious background, that this is not just an assault on our thinking but on our beliefs.

"It (the Christian's use of 'Allah') is to create familiarity, so that it will be a non-issue when they use the word 'Allah'.

"Later the children will say there is 'Allah' in the bible and there is 'Allah' in the Quran, so we (Muslims) can pray in churches as well as mosques," he claimed.

Yesterday Selangor Umno chief Noh Omar banned his members from attending the rally and from rallying outside churches statewide, after critics blasted the ruling party for supporting the protest.

Meanwhile Sunday mass at the said church proceeded without disruption while a group of Muslims including activist Marina Mahathir showed solidarity with the churchgoers by gathering outside bearing flowers.

Christians who observe the religion in Bahasa Malaysia say they have been using the term 'Allah' to refer to god in their prayers and texts for over a century.

The matter became acrimonious when the Home Ministry banned its use, and

escalated when the High Court ruled that the ministry's actions were unconstitutional and lifted the ban.

'Don't blame Jais, blame exco'

Saroni also slammed Selangor exco member for Islamic affairs Sallehin Mukhyi for pleading ignorance over Selangor Islamic Affairs Department's (Jais) raid on the Bible Society of Malaysia on Thursday.

Sallehin (below) in an immediate response to the Jais raid claimed on the same day that the religious department, which answers directly to the sultan, had neither informed the state government nor discussed it with them.

"Either he is not working, or he is sleeping. Either he is irresponsible, or he doesn't want to know. If he does not know, who does?"

"He should know this. (If he doesn't) it shows that the exco is not helping much with state administration," he said.

At the rally, the lobbyists Sekretariat Solidariti Muslim Klang announced that they will fax a letter of protest to father Andrew regarding the use of the word 'Allah' in churches.

The secretariat's chairperson Mohd Khairy Husin said the letter will express their regret over Andrew's statement insisting that churches will continue to use the word 'Allah' in their Malay-language prayers.

He said it contravenes Section 9(1) of the Selangor Non-Islamic Religions (Control of Propagation Among Muslims) Enactment 1988, which bans several words including 'Allah' to be used in context of non-Islamic religions.

"The existence of this enactment is guaranteed by Article 11(4) of the federal constitution, where although there are also guarantees of religious freedom, it is conditional.

"Therefore his (Andrew's) arguments regarding Article 11(4) needs to be read together with Article 11(1) and cannot be separated with other clauses," the letter read.

Article 11(1) of the federal constitution says every person has the right to profess and practise his religion, and subject to Article 11(4), to propagate it.

Article 11(4) allows state law, and federal law in the case of the federal territories, to restrict the propagation of any non-Islamic religious doctrine amongst Muslims.

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd
Source: <http://beta.malaysiakini.com/news/250950>