

PAS seeks fatwa on 'Allah' dual ruling

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PAS has demanded a decision from the National Fatwa Council on whether or not non-Muslims across the country can use the word 'Allah'.

"This must be resolved or Islam will be seen as practising double standards ... It creates the perception that Islam is unkind to non-Muslims," PAS information chief Mahfuz Omar told a press conference at the party headquarters in Kuala Lumpur today.

He was referring to the government's assertion that non-Muslims are not allowed to use 'Allah' in the peninsula, but may continue to do so in Sabah and Sarawak.

Putrajaya made the decision following a Court of Appeal ruling last year declaring that peninsula-based Catholic weekly 'The Herald' cannot use 'Allah' in its Bahasa Malaysia edition.

Mahfuz, who is also Pokok Sena MP, pointed out that Jamil Khir Baharom - the Minister in the Prime Minister's Department who is in charge of Islamic affairs - had told him in Parliament that the word can be used in Sabah and Sarawak.

If the National Fatwa Council fails to decide on this, said Mahfuz, it would be better that the council be dissolved.

"There is only one Quran ... it cannot be that the Quran in Putrajaya says okay (for non-Muslims to use 'Allah'), while the Quran in Selangor says it is okay," he said.

Pressed by journalists about PAS' own stance on the matter, Mahfuz declined to comment.

"There is no need for me to decide. If you want to take the old decision, that is up to you," he said.

The Syura Council, PAS' highest authority, had decided in January last year that non-Muslims cannot use 'Allah'.

However, PAS central committee member Dzulkefly Ahmad (right) who was also at the press conference, interjected: "It is allowed so long as it is not misused."

Tensions have heightened in Selangor after conservative Muslim groups backed by Umno threatened to protest outside churches if Christians continue to use 'Allah'.

Yesterday, one such group had held a protest about a kilometre away from the Lady of Lourdes Church in Klang.

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