

DAP to cops: Question provocateurs, not priest
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The DAP has expressed concern and disappointment that the police have chosen to question Father Lawrence Andrew, the editor of Catholic weekly The Herald, under the Sedition Act.

It is learnt that an investigation is being carried out under Section 4 of the Sedition Act, after he said that the word 'Allah' will continue to be used in Bahasa Malaysia prayer services in churches in Selangor.

In a statement today, DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng added to a slew of comments that have criticised the priorities of the police force in acting on such issues.

"Investigating a Catholic priest for sedition without investigating the racist and extremist provocateurs preaching religious and racial hatred against non-Muslims and non-Malays is a gross violation of the spirit and letter of the fundamental right ... of freedom to profess one's religion," he said.

Lim (left) noted that Father Andrew has previously showed the media a manuscript dating back to 1905, written in old Malay and containing the word 'Allah'.

"Will this manuscript, which has heritage value, also be seized by the Selangor Islamic Affairs Department (Jais), which has provoked international outrage and condemnation for raiding the premises of the Bible Society of Malaysia (BSM)?" he asked.

On Jan 2, Jais had seized more than 300 copies of the Bible in Bahasa Malaysia and another 10 copies in the Iban language from the BSM premises in Damansara, Selangor. Two BSM leaders were held by the police for an hour, but were then released.

"That action was taken despite the (existence of a) so-called 10-point solution formulated by cabinet, (while) no action (has been taken) against those preaching religious hatred and calling for demonstrations outside churches," Lim said.

"This displays the growing tendency of tyranny over the religious minority."

Lim called for an even-handed, impartial and fair approach by the police to ensure that priests are not the only individuals singled out.

'Raid unacceptable'

He reiterated that Islamic agencies do not have the legal authority to enter the premises of non-Muslim religious establishments for an inspection or a search or raid, unless this involves attempts to propagate non-Islamic religions to Muslims.

"This is the constitutional provision accepted by everyone - that Jais can only intrude into non-Muslim premises in pursuit of Muslims who transgress Islamic law," he said.

"Jais' raid is unacceptable because questions are being asked whether Chinese or Hindu temples would be next."

Jais' action has enraged some Muslims, several of whom turned up at the Lady of Lourdes Church in Klang last Sunday (right).

Prior to that, a group of pro-Umno Muslim NGOs had threatened to protest outside the church, but called this off being warned not to do so by the police.

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