

**Don't add fuel to 'Allah' word fire, pleads Gerakan
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A BN leader has urged both his coalition and Pakatan Rakyat to cease fanning the fires of emotion and hatred over the usage of the word "Allah" in Malay bibles.

Taking a swipe at leaders from both coalitions, Gerakan national legal and human rights bureau chief Baljit Singh said "stop the madness and return to sanity!".

He said the matter has gone on for far too long and is "sickening to the core", laying the blame on both sides of the political divide for further complicating the matter.

"This is the time for leaders from both sides to show their true statesmanship and rise above politicking or issuing statements for their own selfish political mileage," Baljit (left) said when contacted.

He urged his boss, Prime Minister Najib Razak, who is also BN national chairman to now show some leadership and make a decision on the issue, that has been blown out of proportion since Jan 2.

Najib has failed to decide on the matter at the recent cabinet meeting, while his deputy had earlier supported Umno Selangor's threat to protest outside Christian churches.

"Please make the decision based on history, the federal constitution and the common practice of all Malaysians," Baljit said.

No to religion, politics, cocktail

"Political consideration should never come into play when it concerns religion," he added.

Baljit urged Najib to decide on the matter soon although the decision may not please some quarters but no doing so will make everyone unhappy.

On Jan 2, Selangor Islamic Religious Department (Jais) raided the Bible Society of Malaysia, seized over 300 copies of the bibles in Malay and Iban languages, and detained two of the Society's staff.

The said bibles, argued Jais, used the term "Allah" to refer to God, but the move was defended by Muslim groups aligned to Umno, who threatened to protest outside the Klang Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church.

Umno has also urged the churches to obey the ruling by the Selangor Sultan not to use the word but Herald editor Father Lawrence Andrew said they will continue to do so during Bahasa Malaysia services.

Andrew is now being probed under the Sedition Act for his alleged defiance of the Selangor Sultan's decree.

The rally was aborted after a police warning. Instead another group, mostly Muslims, led by social activist Marina Mahathir, showed up to show solidarity with Christians.

Jais' controversial action was condemned by many quarters while Najib and some Pakatan leaders like Selangor Menteri Besar Khalid Ibrahim came under fire for their lack of response.

Baljit also questioned the recent remark of DAP national chairman and lawyer Karpal Singh (right) who called for a full bench Federal Court hearing of Catholic weekly The Herald's appeal on the "Allah" word.

Baljit maintains that "God should never be taken to court", saying that the world is laughing at Malaysia for being the first country to do this.

He said the Federal Constitution and the Cabinet's 10 -point solution on the matter points to religion as a state matter.

But the Jais action, whether legal or otherwise, the question is whether the move was "morally right", asked Baljit, a practising lawyer.

"Everyone's making comments just to please their supporters but the teaching in every religion is that one must not hurt one's neighbours," he added.

"So to the leaders of this country, do the right thing although it may not be favourable to some. History will judge you," he said.

