

**Act against Kassim Ahmad, Jakim tells Jawi
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The Islamic Development Department (Jakim) wants action to be taken against controversial Islamic scholar Kassim Ahmad.

In a statement today, Jakim director-general Othman Mustapha said that he has asked the Federal Territories Islamic Department (Jawi) to act within the ambit of its jurisdiction.

On the same note, he added that Jakim also plans to invite Kassim Ahmad and the organiser of the event for a meeting in order for the department to explain the issues raised by the scholar.

This follows Kassim's Perdana Leadership Foundation lecture where he said that Islam in Malaysia has been abused through a "priesthood caste" system.

According to Othman, Kassim's views contravenes the Sunnah Wal Jamaah school of thought practiced in Malaysia and such "false doctrines" should be avoided.

"This is because such matters can have huge implications on the Islamic faith, undermine order and cause public distress," he said.

Othman said religious scholars, whom Kassim terms as being part of the "priesthood caste" are heirs of Prophet Muhammad and play a role in passing down Islam from one generation to another.

Consensus on aurat

He also contradicted Kassim's views that the Quran should not be interpreted using the hadith (sayings and actions of the prophet) but reinterpreted for modern times.

"Hadith is Islam's second source of information and has been used by scholars to interpret the Quran.

"Reinterpretation cannot be done solely based on logic, but requires the discipline of Islamic teachings as ordained in Islam," he said.

He also stressed that there is already consensus among religious scholars that a woman's aurat (parts of the body which needs to be covered from public view) is her whole body, except for her face and palms, and questioning this is a deviant act.

Othman said that state religious authorities have already taken action against publications which are "anti-Hadith" and include "deviant" teachings.

During the event, officiated by former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Kassim called on Muslims to return the Quran as the sole and highest source of information in Islam, and to reinterpret the holy book to suit modern times.

"I have said before that the Quran explains itself. The old method to use the hadith (Prophet's saying and actions) to explain the Quran is not very good, as this means we are saying that the Prophet Muhammad knew everything. This is ridiculous, as he is just a messenger of Allah," he stressed.

Kassim was once accused of being anti-hadith, a charged he has denied.

Referring to the first verse of the Quranic chapter al-Munafiqun, Kassim also said that Muslims are wrong to beatify the prophet.

He also questioned the wearing of the tudung (headscarf) by Muslim women, arguing that hair is not part of the aurat.

Kassim has since come under fire for his views while Mahathir has defended him.

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