

**PAS ulama join debate, saying this is Muslim nation**  
**MalaysiaKini.com**  
**Jun 20, 2014**

Lending its views to the Islamic or secular state debate, PAS Dewan Ulama has described Malaysia as a Muslim country.

Explaining the term, Dewan Ulama information chief Mohd Khairuddin Aman said a Muslim country is ruled by a Muslim majority but Islamic powers are not enforced in total.

"So it is not about whether Malaysia is an Islamic or secular country but rather an effort to give meaning to Islam as the religion of the federation," Mohd Khairuddin (left) said.

The debate was sparked off by Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Jamil Khir Baharom stating in a parliamentary reply that Malaysia is not a secular state.

An Islamic state, Mohd Khairuddin added, is a country that bases economic, social, politics, criminal laws, international relations and other policies on Islam, with the Al Quran and Sunnah (practices of the Prophet Muhammad) are used as a basis or guidance.

The reality in Malaysia, he said, is that since independence in 1957, the country has yet to enforce Islam fully.

'Colonial laws still influence government'

"Colonial laws still control the country's administration, with these laws influencing the government and its administration, despite most of the Malaysians being Muslims," he said.

Hence, Malaysians should be comfortable in using the term Malaysia as a Muslim country and not an Islamic state, said Mohd Khairuddin in contrasting between the two terms.

The position of Islam as the religion of the federation, as emphasised under Article 3 of the Federal Constitution, should be given its true meaning in the Islamic point of view as the religion and way to run the country.

"This can only happen in two ways: the first to amend the law so it becomes clearer in uplifting Islamic powers in the constitution for the administration of the country and secondly, the decision of the judges on the proper interpretation of this provision.

Malaysia cannot be termed as a fully secular country, Mohd Khairuddin said, because the exists the provision that Islam is the religion of the federation.

"Hence, the question is not the status of whether Malaysia is an Islamic or a secular state

but efforts put in to fulfil the provision that Islam is the religion of the federation," he added.

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Source: <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/266308>