

'Burn Bible' threat not seditious, says AGC
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The Attorney-General's Chambers (AGC) today finally broke its silence on its refusal to prosecute Perkasa chief Ibrahim Ali for threatening to burn Malay language copies of the Bible, stating that his remark was not seditious.

This, the AGC said, is because Ibrahim had made the remark in the context of an incident in Jelutong, Penang, where copies of the Bible were distributed to members of the public, including Muslims.

"As decided by the courts, before a statement is deemed to have seditious tendencies, the statement must be seen as a whole and cannot be separated from the context.

"Ibrahim Ali made the statement in the contest of the SMK Jelutong incident. After the context had been studied as a whole, Ibrahim Ali's statement does not fall into the category of having seditious tendencies," it said in a statement today.

As such, the AGC reiterated, Ibrahim was merely out to defend the sanctity of Islam, citing that this was exactly what the right-wing leader had said when he issued the threat.

"Clearly, Ibrahim Ali had no intention to create religious discord but was merely defending the sanctity of Islam.

"The free distribution of the Bible outside the compound of SMK Jelutong can threaten the faith of Muslim students who lack religious knowledge if they were to read the Bible, more so as it contains jawi writing," it said.

Likewise, the AGC said, Ibrahim's statement also does not fall within the purview of Section 504, Section 298 and Section 298A of the Penal Code as he was defending Islam.

Section 504 is on intentional insult with intent to provoke a breach of peace, Section 298 is on uttering words with deliberate intend to wound religious feelings and Section 298A is on causing disharmony, disunity, enmity, hatred or ill-will.

AG says there's no case

Considering these facts, the AGC said, Attorney-General Abdul Gani Patail decided against proceeding with the case.

It added that Gani (right) had likewise decided against prosecuting three men who had distributed copies of the Bible in Jelutong as their intention was not to give it exclusively to Muslims.

"What happened was anyone could take the Bible from the suspects.

"Investigations showed the suspects did not have the intention to distribute them to Malay students only.

"Therefore the elements of Section 298A of the Penal Code and Section 5 of the Syariah Criminal Offences (State Of Penang) Enactment 1996 cannot be fulfilled," it said.

Minister in the Prime Minister Department Nancy Shukri was earlier this month heavily criticised when she said in a parliamentary written reply that Ibrahim would not be prosecuted because he was defending Islam.

Nancy later defended herself, stating that she was merely conveying the official explanation of the Attorney-General's Chambers.

Ibrahim had made the threat early last year after taking offence that the Bible contained the word 'Allah' to refer to God, which he claimed could confuse Muslims.

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