

**Bishop: Dr M mistaking convolution for cleverness**  
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Catholic Bishop Dr Paul Tan Chee Ing described Dr Mahathir Mohamad's latest defence of Ibrahim Ali's threat to burn Malay language Bibles as "pathetic".

The vocal head of the Catholic Church in the Malacca-Johor diocese said that to suggest, as Mahathir had done, that the Perkasa chief had no bad intentions other than what Muslims would nominally feel about how to dispose off old copies of the Al-Quran when he urged the burning of Malay language Bibles, "mistakes convolution for cleverness".

"As well believe that the moon is made of green cheese," was the Jesuit-trained prelate's tart rejoinder to Mahathir's latest extenuation on behalf of Ibrahim.

The Perkasa firebrand has been the target of public ire for apparent immunity from the spate of sedition investigations and charges recently preferred against a host of social activists and opposition politicians for statements ranging from the robust forms of democratic dissent to the milder versions of ethnic and religious discourtesy.

"Ibrahim Ali's intentions in urging the burning of Malay language Bibles were a long way from being benign," said Bishop Paul Tan.

"The threat was uttered at a time when tensions were mounting over the controversy on the exclusivity or not of the term 'Allah' for God," he added.

"Ibrahim was the self-appointed guardian of Islamic manners and morals at that time and he said what he said in that capacity.

"There was nothing benign about his intentions at the time he gave vent to the threat to burn Malay language Bibles.

"To equate what he said with what Muslims are wont to do with old copies of the Al-Quran requires the willing suspension of disbelief," commented the bishop..