

'Najib's 'Allah' vow to Borneo Christians hollow'

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The latest report of a seizure of Christian CDs at the KL International Airport 2 (KLIA2) shows that Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's assurance to Borneo Christians on the 'Allah' issue is not reliable, says Serdang MP Ong Kian Ming.

He was referring to a Malay Mail Online report on the confiscation of hundreds of Christian CDs and books from a Sabah resident last Saturday, when the latter arrived at KLIA2 en route home from Medan, Indonesia.

"If this report is true, then it proves Najib's assurances to the Christian community in Sabah and Sarawak are completely undependable and unreliable.

"This confirms the view of the Sarawak Ministers Fellowship that 'there is no basis for Najib to give his assurance (that Borneo Christians can use the word 'Allah' in their Malay texts)," Ong (left) said in a statement today.

"The confiscation of this Christian material containing the word Allah once again shows that the Christians in Sabah and Sarawak have no assurance that the Bible printed in Indonesia and imported to Malaysia through KLIA, or any other airport, will not be confiscated by the federal authorities as a result of the Court of Appeal ruling on the use of the word Allah as 'not being an integral part' of the Christian faith," he said.

Although the government had won its second appeal against a ruling to lift the Home Ministry ban on Catholic weekly the Herald from using the word 'Allah' to refer to God, the cabinet had given assurances to Sabah and Sarawak Christians that the ruling did not apply to their daily practice.

Authorities not abiding cabinet decision

However, government authorities do not appear to be abiding by the cabinet decision.

For example the Home Ministry confiscated Christian CDs belonging to Sarawakian Jill Ireland, and despite a subsequent court decision ordering the materials' release, the ministry is appealing the ruling.

Ong added that the confiscation showed the "complete failure" of the federal government to protect freedom of religion as enshrined in the Federal Constitution.

"It also shows the failure of the federal government in trying to keep up the pretence of having an inconsistent promise of 'one country, two systems', in having one set of laws for Peninsular Malaysia and another set of laws for Sabah when it comes to something as

fundamental as our constitutional rights to practise our religions freely,” he said.

Calling upon the prime minister to order Home Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi to release the Christian CDs, Ong also urged Najib to order the home minister not to appeal against the High Court decision for the ministry to return CDs belonging to Jill Ireland.

Jill’s CDs were brought in from Indonesia and were seized at the Low-Cost Carrier Terminal (LCCT) in 2008.

Meanwhile, Ong said failure to do so would only confirm that the prime minister is a “toothless tiger, incapable of ensuring that his own ministers implement his promises to the people”.

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