

Pakatan MPs consider Bill on inter-faith custody

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Pakatan Rakyat MPs are considering moving a Private Member's Bill to amend the Law Reform (Marriage and Divorce) Act 1976 to solve interfaith custody battles if the government continues "dragging its feet" on the matter.

"By the next session, if the government does not come up with something, we might push for a Private Member's Bill. We will look at our options and we will consult the Bar Council and NGOs," DAP's Ipoh Barat MP M Kulasegaran said today.

Kulasegaran, a lawyer, said this at a press conference at the Parliament lobby, at which PKR's Subang MP R Sivarasa and PAS' Sepang MP Hanipa Maidin, both lawyers as well, were also present.

The MPs gave de facto law minister Nancy Shukri until March to come up with a concrete solution to solve the inter-faith custody of children problems.

Kula said that the law should be amended to explicitly state that divorce and custody cases when one spouse converts to Islam should be handled and heard by the civil court alone.

"The section must spell out clearly and unambiguously that notwithstanding the conversion in all respect of custody and maintenance shall be dealt only by the civil court," he said.

"The government is not taking the lead and worse still dragging its feet (to resolve the issue)," he added.

He said that aside from publicised court cases, many other people are suffering due the legal uncertainty in interfaith custody battles.

"Many families are suffering due to these anomalies," he said.

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