

Azmin urged to break silence on stamped bibles

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Selangor Menteri Besar Azmin Ali had been urged to break his silence on Bible Society of Malaysia (BSM) bibles that were stamped before being returned to the Association of Churches Sarawak.

Gerakan Youth Chief Tan Keng Liang said that Christians deserved to know why this was done.

"Even if the state government refuses to apologise over the desecration and ban of the Bibles, they should have at the very least provide a logical explanation as to why the bibles needed to be "stamped" and banned from the state," he said in a statement today.

He said this action was contrary to the state government's pledge to ensure moderation and freedom of religion in the state.

"I hereby urge the menteri besar of Selangor to be brave and come forward to explain why the state government desecrated and banned these Christian bibles," Tan (right) said while urging the state to be "fair" to all Christian Malaysians.

On Sunday, Azmin had refused to broach on this issue when asked by reporters, saying he considered the matter settled.

The bibles were seized in January by the State Islamic Department (Jais) after a raid at BSM facilities.

The long drag in ensuring the return of the bibles was among the reasons why previous Selangor MB Khalid Ibrahim was ousted from his post by PKR.

Azmin, his replacement, swiftly ensured the return of the bibles but the stamps on the holy books had prompted BSM to demand for an "apology" from the state.

The society said that the bibles were now only "good as museum pieces" and will not be distributed.

Meanwhile, MCA Syariah Law and Policy Implementation Special Task Force Deputy Chairperson Koo Chin Nam urged religious authorities to respect holy texts of non-Muslims and not to "defile" them.

"Stamping such warnings on the 351 sacred texts are inflammatory and akin to bullying. Religious authorities must stop taking it upon themselves to interfere and regulate non-Islamic faiths and practices," he said in a statement today.

Koo also asked the Selangor Islamic Council (Mais) to explain the amount of Malay-speaking Christian Bumiputeras who are working with the civil service, who have the constitutional right to refer to Malay scriptures.

"We reassert that native Sabahans, Sarawakians and the Orang Asli should have access to religious texts in their native language on Peninsular Malaysia," he said.

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