

## **But Zahid says church protest seditious**

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**By Adrian Wong**

Home Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi has deemed the protest against a church to be seditious, differing with Inspector-General of Police Khalid Abu Bakar.

"Of course! Yes, yes, yes!" the minister said when asked by reporters today if the protest was seditious.

"I am very colour-blind. The police are very colour blind. Action has to be taken or will be taken against them," he added.

To another question, Zahid confirmed that disciplinary action would be taken against Umno members who took part in the protest.

"Of course, of course, of course... Because they are breaching the law. In Umno, we have to respect other religions. They have to (face) the consequences," he stressed.

He also took the opportunity to defend the amendments to the Sedition Act, which have met with strong opposition from several quarters.

But now, Zahid said, there were people who wanted it used against those involved in the protest against the church.

The amendments have been approved by the Lower House but not yet passed by the Upper House, the Dewan Negara.

### **IGP: Nothing seditious about protest**

Shortly before Zahid declared the church protest was seditious, Khalid had said the police did not see any form of sedition in the protest because it "did not touch on religion".

He also noted that upon the request of the residents in Taman Medan, Petaling Jaya, the pastor himself agreed to remove the cross from outside the church.

"There was no violence. We (the police) see it as a flash mob carried out by the residents, without orchestration from any quarters," the IGP added.

Khalid's brother Abdullah (left), an Umno division leader, had taken part in the protest demanding the removal of the cross from the church building.

Zahid, who is an Umno vice-president, also said former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad's claim that Umno's support for Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak was not genuine was Mahathir's personal finding.

Mahathir had claimed that when he talked to Umno members who had expressed support for Najib, nearly all did not actually stand with the party president.

"That is Mahathir's analysis. I don't know on what basis he reached his conclusion. I respect his opinion, but he cannot force other people to believe his findings," Zahid said.

He also said Mahathir's claim that the show of support for Najib as "superficial" was unsubstantiated.

While he respected Mahathir's opinion, Zahid said, the former prime minister should not impose his belief on others.

"When Mahathir was in power, he demanded total loyalty. So the current leadership demands the same from our members and leaders."

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