

Putrajaya will take over Hadi's bill, PM says

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UMNO AGM Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak said the government will "take over" PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang's bill to amend the Syariah Courts (Criminal Jurisdiction) Act 1965.

"I urge all not to politicise the matter. It is a Private Member's Bill, which will be taken over by the federal government," Najib, who is also Umno president, said in his policy speech at the Umno general assembly today.

He did not elaborate how it will be "taken over" by the government.

Najib said that Nov 24, the day Hadi tabled his motion seeking leave to table his bill, was a "historic" day.

Despite the two parties traditionally being rivals, PAS has, in recent years, been accused of colluding with Umno, particularly on matters concerning Islamic law.

Meanwhile, minister in charge of Parliament affairs Azalina Said Othman confirmed that the government will be "taking over" the bill during the second reading.

"Marang (Hadi) has to first finish the motion and it would be debated and voted and that means the first reading is completed and the government will pick up.

"There will be a statement and the government will pick it up as a second bill and (minister in charge of Islamic affairs) Jamil Khir (Baharom) will read it as a government bill," she told reporters at the sidelines of the Umno annual general assembly today.

The process will take place in March, she said.

Won't affect non-Muslims

Hadi's bill seeks to raise the sentencing limit of the syariah court from a maximum RM3,000 fine, six strokes of the whip and five year jail limit to maximum 30 years' jail, RM100,000 fine and 100 strokes of the whip.

On Nov 22, Deputy Prime Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi [briefed](#) Muslim MPs on Hadi's bill.

During the meeting, it was decided that a proposal would be submitted to Najib to urge him to form a parliamentary select committee, consisting of Muslim and non-Muslim MPs, to review the bill after it is tabled in Parliament.

BN component parties MCA, MIC and Gerakan said they would oppose the bill in its current form, arguing that it is unconstitutional.

Gerakan said the bill would create a parallel system alongside civil law, but Najib said this would not happen.

"To the non-Muslims, don't worry because you will not be subject to it and the government is reviewing if there will be dualism in penalties," Najib said.

While Hadi's motion to seek leave to table the bill was read on Nov 24, the Marang MP will only elaborate on his motion to the Dewan Rakyat during its next sitting in March next year.

Meanwhile, MIC president S Subramaniam said the party is firmly against the implementation of hudud law.

However, Subramaniam welcomed Najib's assurance that Hadi's bill will be studied in detail and that the government will not allow a dual legal system in the country.

He also took note of the prime minister's assurance that the current legal system as it is will not be affected by the amendment.

"We in MIC will set up a legal committee to study any proposals which might be put forward (in Hadi's bill), examine all angles and study the overall implications.

"We are not for the implementation of hudud law in the country and we are very cautious of any amendments which might pave the way for its implementation," he said.