

Settlement fails: 'Allah' issue goes back to court
Malaysiakini.com
April 30, 2010

The Sidang Injil Borneo (SIB) has failed to reach an out-of-court settlement with the Home Ministry over the use of the word "Allah" in its Christian books.

High Court judge Aziah Ali set June 24 for hearing on the SIB's, also known as the Evangelical Church of Borneo, and its president Pastor Jerry WA Dusing's leave applications for a judicial review to challenge the Home Ministry and the government over the use of the word 'Allah'.

Senior federal counsel Azizah Nawawi, representing the Home Ministry and the government, told the media that the judge ordered SIB to submit written submission on May 14 and on May 27 for them to file the submission in reply.

The SIB and Dusing were represented by counsel Bobby Chew and Lim Heng Seng.

They had filed the leave applications on Dec 10, 2007 to contest the seizure of six boxes of Christian educational publications shipped from Indonesia by the Customs Department at the Low Cost Carrier Terminal in Sepang in August that year.

However, the confiscated books were returned to the church on Jan 25, 2008.

Following that, they withdrew some of their declarations in the leave application to challenge the seizure of the book, and would focus on the issue of the policy that no other religion could import books with the word 'Allah'.

Books only for Christians

In the application they sought a declaration that they had the constitutional right to use the word 'Allah' in all their religious publications and practices, and not just within the church.

Royal Customs and Excise Department officers had confiscated eight religious books brought in by the church from Indonesia for its Sunday classes for children.

The ministry, which controls the department, had claimed that the books contained the word 'Allah' which was barred for use by non-Muslims, and seized them to prevent confusion among Muslims.

Dusing said the books were teaching reference materials meant only for Christian consumption and would not be used to preach to Muslims, as the ministry appeared to imply.

- Bernama