

Non-Muslim's bid to be sharie lawyer to be heard Nov 2
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The High Court here will hear on Nov 2 the application by a non-Muslim woman lawyer to be a syarie lawyer in the Federal Territory.

High Court Judge Mohd Zawawi Salleh is set to hear Victoria Jayaseele Martin's judicial review application to challenge a decision that only Muslim lawyers are allowed to practise at the Syariah Court in the Federal Territory.

In her application filed on May 19, Victoria also sought an order of certiorari to quash the decision by the Federal Territory Religious Council, through the syarie lawyer committee, refusing her application to be admitted as a syarie lawyer.

She named the religious council as the respondent.

Senior assistant registrar Halilah Suboh set the date in chambers when the case came up for case management today.

Victoria's lawyer Razlan Hadri Zulkifli told the media that the court also allowed the Attorney General's Chambers' application to be an intervenor in the judicial review proceedings as there were no objection from the applicant as well as from the respondent.

Lawyer Zulkifli Che Yong is representing the religious council while Senior Federal Counsel Nadia Hanim Mohd Tajuddin appears for the AG's Chambers.

Test case

Victoria, 48, in her application, among others wants a mandamus order to compel the religious council to accept her as syarie lawyer.

She also sought a declaration that Rule 10 of the Syarie Lawyer Rules 1993, mandating that only Muslims could be admitted as syarie lawyer, had contravened Article 8, 5 and 10 of the Federal Constitution.

On May 14, she obtained permission from the High Court in her preliminary legal bid to be a syarie lawyer in the Federal Territory after Justice Mohd Zawawi granted her leave to apply for a judicial review.

This is the first test case in Kuala Lumpur of a non-Muslim lawyer being given leave to challenge the ruling that only Muslim lawyers are allowed to practise at the Syariah Court here.

In the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur, a key requirement to become a syarie lawyer is that one has to be Muslim.

Victoria, who obtained a Diploma in Syariah Law and Practice from the International Islamic University Malaysia in 2004, had sought legal action at the civil court after her application to be admitted as syarie lawyer was rejected by the religious council.

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