

Syariah panel to monitor controversial ESQ training
Malaysiakini.com
July 14, 2010

A special meeting or muzakarah of the National Fatwa Council has decided that the ESQ Leadership Training course can be conducted in this country with full monitoring by a syariah panel appointed by ESQ.

Council chairperson Abdul Shukor Husin said the decision was made after the council which met on June 16, was satisfied and opined that the reservations about the course content could be rectified.

He said the meeting also decided that ESQ should make changes or correct whatever facts, statements or course activities which could create confusion or were against Islamic teachings.

"As provided by law, the power to issue a fatwa (edict) rests with the state religious authorities.

"The council respects the fatwa issued by the states including on the ESQ course issued by the Federal Territory mufti," he said when announcing the council's decision on the ESQ course status at the Malaysia Islamic Development Department (Jakim) in Putrajaya today.

The FT Islamic Religious Council has banned for Muslims the motivational course module of ESQ Leadership Center Sdn Bhd after it was found to be in conflict with Islamic teachings.

The company, established in the country in 2006, provides human capital training and was founded by Indonesian Dr Ary Ginanjar Agustian.

No un-Islamic elements

Abdul Shukor said the muzakarah also decided that the ESQ syariah panel should be responsible for monitoring fully the rectification or changes made to the course content and this should be continuously reported to the National Fatwa Council.

He said the decisions made at the muzakarah were based on the views of the council members who agreed on taking the approach of discussing, educating and rectifying any arising doubts rather than penalising the course organisers straight away.

He also commended the ESQ executives for their openness and willingness to discuss with the syariah panel and to accept criticisms and advice to rectify anything that could be misleading for Muslims.

Abdul Shukor said the ESQ training programme was also conducted openly and anyone could join it and give comments.

He said eight muftis who were part of the muzakarah panel and a number of deputy muftis who had participated in the ESQ programme had told that there were no elements in the programme which were in conflict with Islamic principles.

He disclosed that the syariah panel appointed by ESQ and approved by Jakim, comprised religious experts and academicians.

They are former Jakim director-general Mustafa Abdul Rahman, Johor Islamic Religious Council advisor Nooh Gadut, former Kedah mufti Sheikh Hasbullah Abdul Halim, former FT mufti Kadir Talib and dean of the Quran and sunnah faculty of Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM) Adnan Yusof.

Attended by politicians, professionals

Abdul Shukor said the views of ulama and Islamic organisations in Indonesia were also considered in making the decision on the ESQ training programme.

He said the ESQ programme was also conducted in a number of Islamic countries including Brunei and Saudi Arabia, and attended by religious figures, politicians, academicians, professionals and others.

According to him, the muzakarah members met seven times to deliberate over the issue, the first in April last year and the last on June 16 this year.

He said the decision was not legally binding and was only a religious opinion, so it was up to the state Islamic religious authorities whether to apply it or not.

"We are not disputing the edict issued by Federal Territory but respecting it, and it is also its right whether to withdraw it or not."

However, he said, as provided under the states' Islamic Religious Administration Enactment, the National Fatwa Council should be referred to on issues involving national interest for its views before any edict was issued by the states.

This was to create uniformity with regard to religious rulings made in this country, he added.

- Bernama

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