

**Gov't has no reason to drop 'Allah' appeal**  
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Home Minister Hishamuddin Hussein today said there is no reason for the government to retract its appeal in the on-going 'Allah' case, despite having admitted regret that the decision to ban the use of the name by non-Muslims will "haunt" his ministry.

He said his personal feelings over the issue are inconsequential, as the case is being heard in court and should be allowed to go through the proper process.

"Why would the government retract the appeal, or why would the church retract the court case? It applies both ways, you know," he said at a press conference at a hotel in Kuala Lumpur.

NONE "There could be also a request for the church to drop the case, as much as there is a request for the government to drop the appeal... let the courts decide because that is the process."

It was reported on Sunday that Hishamuddin (right) admitted that his predecessor, Syed Hamid Albar, should not have banned the use of the name 'Allah' by the Catholic Church two years earlier, adding that it would haunt his ministry "for a very long time".

His remark sparked calls by both MCA and DAP for the government to drop its appeal.

MCA drew flak from Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin, who ticked the coalition's second largest party for reviving the issue.

'Many regrets'

When it was pointed out that it was he who had expressed 'regret' over the decision, Hishamuddin clarified that it was interpreted based on his answer to a question at the Fourth Annual Malaysian Student Leaders Summit last Sunday

"What I described to participants in the conference is basically my experience with the church leaders, and my experience in Sabah and Sarawak, and this is peculiar to my discussions with them.

"If we say regret (and) it's an issue, you can look at it in many ways if you want to indulge in polemics.

"I regret that there are terrorists in Malaysia, I regret there are peragut (snatch-thieves) in Malaysia, I regret that this (word 'Allah') is becoming an issue... but why pick on that to make it a firestorm or bigger than what it is?

"There are many regrets (over what) we do, but whether or not I regret is out of my control because it is in the courts," he said

Police Act amendments soon

On the request by Gerakan for the Home Ministry to speed up its proposed review of Section 27 of the Police Act, Hishamuddin said they are making progress though he declined to elaborate.

"It's in the works. We are amending it, provided the cabinet approves it. But until such time, the law is the law... you don't have a permit, you're against the law (and) the police (will) take action. Simple," he said.

anti-isa vigil in petaling jaya amcorp mall Hishamuddin brushed aside public outcry over the police's alleged rough handling of activists taking part in the anti-ISA vigil on Sunday night (right), defending the men in blue whom he said had acted "without fear or favour in many cases".

"In a lot of cases where we saw firestorms, (such as) the cow-head issue, the church issue, the burning of churches, the pig-head in a surau, all can be firestorms if you want it to be.

"But if you look at the bigger picture, and not look at it simplistically or with another agenda, then life goes on. If you want to make it political, want to make it a firestorm or sensationalise it, I will not dance to that tune," he said.

Hishamuddin noted that his ministry will also "study" Suhakam's complaint regarding questioning of lawyers by police when negotiating the release of activists detained over Sunday night's assembly.

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