

S'gor exco proposes guidelines for mosque visits
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The Selangor exco for Islamic affairs and Malay customs Hasan Mohamed Ali today said that he will propose guidelines for those who want to visit suraus and mosques in the state.

This follows the recent controversy over DAP Serdang MP Teo Nie Ching's visit to a surau in her constituency.

pkrtaman ehsan selayang ceramah 020810 hasan aliSpeaking to reporters today, Hasan (right) said that at present there are only general conventions for non-Muslims who want to visit surau and mosques in the state.

"However, we hear all sorts of opinions, for example on whether or not non-Muslims can enter (mosques). I believe the majority of scholars believe that non-Muslims can enter mosques all the way to the prayer hall.

"But they (should) adhere to decorum in terms of clothing etc. This is something that we need to detail. What is appropriate clothing? Do (women) need to cover their heads; in what way?

"At the state mosque, for example, non-Muslims are given robes and scarves. Those hosting events (at mosques) should provide these to avoid problems," he said.

He also proposes that anyone who wants to visit a Muslim place of worship to write to the Selangor Islamic Department (Jais) and to the mosque itself, so that they can be told the restrictions beforehand.

Jais director summoned

Hasan, who is also PAS commissioner, said that he has also called for a meeting with Jais director Mohammed Khusrin Munawi to ask for an explanation over the latter's actions, but a date has not been set.

NONE"The matter has been exploited by those who are out to take advantage. This has caused the immediate reaction of the Selangor Islamic Council (Mais) and Jais.

"The newspapers has been very lopsided in their report, reporting that Teo had delivered a tazkirah and that she was handing over financial aid to PAS members," he said.

Teo had explained in a media statement last week that she had merely spoken about education options in the state, and only after being invited to do so by her hosts.

In Utusan Malaysia's front page article last Friday attacking Teo for her surau visit, Mohammed Khusrin had remarked that Teo had desecrated the surau with her presence because non-Muslims are considered "unclean".

Later that day, Mais issued a statement saying that it has suspended the surau committee and is taking over management of the surau.

The article also claimed that the Sultan of Selangor was "angered" and "disappointed" by the incident.

'Embarrassing and excessive' politicking

Meanwhile, Selangor MB's political secretary Faekah Husin (below) has called the bid by Umno leaders to politicise the matter "excessive and embarrassing to Muslims and the spirit of the holy month of Ramadan".

faekah husin "This is especially after Teo's swift reaction to explain and apologise to the Sultan and the Muslim community if her actions had caused offence. This should have been accepted with wisdom and an open heart," she said in a statement today.

She said that instead of defending Islam, the acts only widen the gap between people of different races and religions.

"The Selangor government takes this seriously, and will not hesitate in taking action against parties who wilfully cause tension between those of different race and religions," she said.

Besides Teo, several non-Muslim DAP representatives have visited mosques and surau in their capacity as state assemblypersons and parliamentarians.

Subang MP Hannah Yeoh for example had attended an event at a surau, although held in the exterior of the premises.

william leong in masjid 290810 Selayang MP William Leong however made a similar visit to a mosque in his constituency (right) and had given a speech, also upon invitation, at the prayer hall.

Utusan Malaysia dutifully whipped up another storm based on reports on a blog, and Leong, who was due to attend another event at the same mosque in Selayang, found it suddenly cancelled.

He could not be contacted for comment.

The issue of non-Muslim state representatives is not new, with PKR assemblyperson Xavier Jeyakumar's surau visit last year provoking the same reaction from Khusrin.

In March 2010, the National Fatwa Council said that non-Muslims are allowed in mosques as long as they observe proper dress and behaviour.

It is, however, not compulsory for state religious bodies to follow the national fatwa.

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