

**MIC : revoke ban on Indian priests**  
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MIC has called on the government to lift the ban on the recruitment of priests from India for Hindu temples and Sikh gurdwaras in the country. MCPX

samy vellu pc 120308 agitatedIn a statement today, party president S Samy Vellu said the temples and gurdwaras urgently required about 500 and 300 priests respectively.

"I have recently met Home Minister Syed Hamid Albar to lift the ban on the recruitment of the priests but I was informed that the matter had to be brought up at the cabinet level," he said.

He added that Syed Hamid had told him that the matter concerns a cabinet decision so it is up to the cabinet to deliberate on whether it should be rescinded.

"I am appealing to the government to take into consideration the sensitivity involved as the priests are needed urgently to conduct daily prayers," said the MIC president.

**'Major dissatisfaction'**

If the matter is left unresolved, Samy Vellu warned that it could spark off "major dissatisfaction among the Hindu and Sikh communities."

He said some of the priests were being deported or had their work permits terminated.

"This has caused a lot of anxiety to the devotees and the temple as well as gurdwara management committees, and they have appealed to me to bring up the matter with the government," he said.

According to Samy Vellu, he had raised the matter in the cabinet before but there had been slow progress.

"I sincerely hope that the cabinet will review its decision fast and allow for the recruitment of these priests," he said.

Samy Vellu said it will be a good move for the government to review the ban in order to win back the confidence of the Indian community, especially with tomorrow being the Tamil New Year.