

Herald vs Gov't: Court case put off
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The court case between Catholic weekly
MCPX

Herald and the government was postponed to Tuesday after the Attorney General's
Chambers asked for more time to prepare for the case.

herald judicial review kl court 250408 group with lawyersThis was decided by Kuala Lumpur
High Court of Appellate and Special Powers Division Judge Lau Bee Lan in a packed
courtroom filled with Herald supporters.

On March 19, applicant Titular Roman Catholic Archbishop of KL filed for a judicial review
against the internal security minister and government over an order that disallowed Herald
from using the word 'Allah' in the Bahasa Malaysia section of the publication.

Close to 200 Catholic supporters filled the courtroom along with the Church's top
representative in the country, Archbishop Murphy Pakiam, seated in the gallery.

The ministry at that time led by Johari Baharum initially held back the weekly's publishing
licence last year over this matter but later granted a permit with no conditions attached
after a stern outcry from the Catholic community.

Declare it 'null and void'

Archbishop Pakiam on behalf of Herald is seeking from the court:

- * leave to apply for the ministry to declare that its decision to prohibit Herald from
using the word 'Allah' in its publication is null and void; Herald is entitled to use the word
'Allah' in the publication and that the word 'Allah' is not exclusive to the religion of Islam.

- * leave to quash the ministry's decision in prohibiting Herald from using the word 'Allah'
in its publication

- * an order for Herald to continue using 'Allah' in its publication until the court decides
on the matter.

Senior federal counsel Suzana Atan told the court that she did not object to the second
relief but needed more time to submit on the other two.

The hearing which began at 10.15am lasted for about 20 minutes before being adjourned by
Lau.

herald judicial review kl court 250408 archbishop murphy pakiam father lawrence
andrewHerald's editor Father Lawrence Andrew said he will be praying for a decision that is
in their favour on Tuesday.

"We want a decision in our favour. We want to uphold our rights to worship as we were
doing it for centuries," he told reporters.

Lawyers who appeared for Pakiam were Porres Royan, S Selvarajah, Derek Fernandez, Leonard Teoh and Annou Xavier.

"We are asking the court to say the decision was wrong and quash it and declare that the Herald can use the word 'Allah' in its publication," said Royan.

Also present in court were Pakiam and Christian Federation of Malaysia executive secretary Reverend Dr Hermen Shastri.

Continue with civil suit

Meanwhile, the Herald will continue to press on with a civil lawsuit filed against the government last December concerning the same matters.

Lawrence also confirmed that the 28-page newspaper that is published in four languages - English, Bahasa Malaysia, Chinese and Tamil - still uses the word 'Allah' in its publication.

herald the catholic weekly online 241207The Herald, which publishes news and information for Catholics in Malaysia has a circulation of around 12,000.

Former minister in the Prime Minister's Department Abdullah Mohamad Zain previously said the cabinet at its meetings on Oct 18 and Nov 1 last year decided that the word 'Allah' could only be used by Muslims to avoid confusion.

Abdullah said non-Muslims should use the word God ('Tuhan' in Malay) instead, although the word Allah has been used in the Malay-language Bible for centuries.

"The use of the word 'Allah' by other religions may arouse sensitivity and create confusion among Muslims," he said.

The use of 'Allah' outside of Islam has stirred controversy in Malaysia previously. Four years ago, the Bible in the Iban language was banned because it translated the word 'God' as Allah Taala, which resembles Islam's name for God. The ban was, however, lifted after protests from the Christian community.

A Sabah church has filed a lawsuit against the prime minister and the government for banning the importation of Christian children books from Indonesia which contain the word 'Allah'.

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