



'Allah' row: Dr M says law cannot solve it
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Former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad has disagreed with the government's attempt to seek a solution for the 'Allah' controversy through the courts.

Hinting in his latest blog posting that the executive should flex its muscles on this case, he said the government cannot resolve the issue by turning to the court of appeal.

"The law does not take into account whether a particular issue is sensitive or otherwise and whether it has the potential to spark tension or animosity between the believers of different faiths," he added.

Mahathir, who stepped down in 2003 after 22 years in power, said a similar controversy had arose during his tenure as prime minister.

At that time, he added, the cabinet felt that the usage of the word 'Allah' in the Bible was sensitive.

As an analogy, Mahathir said the term *kaum pendatang* or immigrants (used to describe non-Malays in a derogatory manner) can also be referred to the courts.

"But this is something sensitive which cannot be resolved by the courts," added the 84-year-old politician.

Furthermore, the former premier said the term 'Allah' is not used in the Jewish Torah, which is in the Hebrew language, or the Bible in Latin, Greek or other European languages.

"In Judaism, God is called 'Yahweh' which is translated in English as 'Jehovah'. In the Bible, Jesus and God are the same. There is no use of 'Allah' in these languages," he said.

'Allah has no father, no son'

Mahathir said in the efforts to explain the Christian faith among Muslims or those familiar with Islam, God is referred to as 'Allah' so that it is easily understood by the listeners.

"This translation is wrong. The Malay word which is supposed to be used for God is 'Tuhan'," he added.

The former premier also pointed out that in Christianity, there is the concept of 'Trinity', where there is "God the Father, God the Son and the Holy Ghost".

Mahathir said if the Bible or a discourse is in Malay, the reference would be '*Allah sebagai Bapak, Allah sebagai Anak dan Roh yang Suci*'.

"The Muslims would definitely oppose this. In Islam, Allah has no father and no son. It is unborn and has not given birth to anyone. Allah is only one. It cannot be equated with anyone," he added.

Turning to the US, he said it is common for Christians there who no longer have strong faith to state that 'God is dead'.

"How would the Muslims feel if this expression is replaced with the phrase 'Allah is dead'?" he asked.

Mahathir also noted that in Peninsular Malaysia, nobody has heard of Christians using 'Allah' when speaking about God in the Malay language.

"Why the need to use the term now? I hope the government would be careful in handling this matter," he said.

The Home Ministry yesterday filed an appeal against the High Court ruling that the word 'Allah' could be used by the Catholic weekly *Herald*.

Herald, which is printed in four languages, has been using the word 'Allah' as a translation for 'God' in its Malay-language section.

The word 'Allah' is widely used among indigenous Christian tribes in Sabah and Sarawak, most of whom speak Bahasa Malaysia.

The home minister had justified the ban on grounds of national security and to avoid misunderstanding and confusion among Muslims.

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