

'Allah CDs' case continues June 3
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The Kuala Lumpur High Court has fixed June 3 to continue case management of a judicial review sought by Sarawakian, Jill Ireland Lawrence Bill.

She is challenging the Home Ministry's order to confiscate compact discs that she brought in from Indonesia, which contain the word 'Allah'.

Senior assistant registrar, Halilah Suboh set the date in chambers today when the matter came up for case management.

Senior federal counsel Andi Razali Jaya, told reporters that the date allows for the Home Ministry to file the necessary affidavit and for lawyers representing Jill to file any affidavit-in-reply, if any.

"The matter will be heard before deputy registrar Nik Mohd Fadli Nik Azlan," he said.

azlanJill's lawyer Annou Xavier said he hoped that, by then, the courts would have also resolved a related matter regarding the KL High Court's decision last December to lift the ban on the use of 'Allah' in the Catholic weekly Herald.

The Home Ministry has appealed the decision and has managed to obtain a stay. The Court of Appeal has yet to set a date for the case.

CD confiscation challenged

The CDs were confiscated from Jill at the KL International Airport two years ago.

The Home Ministry claimed that the CDs were a threat to security due to their use of 'prohibited words', and that this was also a breach of the Islamic Development Department's guidelines.

azlanJill, a Christian, argued that she uses the word 'Allah' in her prayers, worship and religious education. She also prays in both Bahasa Malaysia and Bahasa Indonesia, making use of 'Al-Kitab' (the Bible) which uses the word 'Allah'.

Apart from an unspecified sum in damages, she is seeking an order of certiorari to quash the ministry's directive to confiscate the CDs, and the return of the CDs.

She is further seeking declarations:

- * That she can use the word 'Allah', as well as to own, use and import materials with the word in exercising her religious freedom, as Christians in Sabah and Sarawak have been using 'Allah' for centuries;

- * That, under Article 11 of the federal constitution, she is allowed to use and import publications to practise her religion; and

* That there should be no discrimination on issues pertaining to religion under Article 8.

On May 4 last year, High Court judge Alizatul Khair Osman allowed Jill to obtain leave (permission to open the case) for the judicial review.

The case has now been referred to Justice Mohd Apandi Ali, after Alizatul has since been transferred to the Commercial Court.

Jill, in her supporting affidavit, claimed that certain parts of 'Al-Kitab Bahasa Indonesia' and 'Al-Kitab Bahasa Malaysia' clearly show that the word 'Allah' has been used for a long time by the Christian community.

She also contended that the 'Kitab Perjanjian Baharu' (The New Testament) in Malay, published by the British and Foreign Bible Society as early as 1949, show the use of 'Allah' in Malay-language Bibles.

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