

New calls to drop 'Allah' word after Hisham's remark
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KUALA LUMPUR - The MCA, PAS and a DAP leader have urged Home Minister Hishammuddin Hisham (left) to revoke the ban on the word "Allah."

MCA Central Committee member Loh Seng Kok said Hishammuddin was aware that the forbidden use of the word "Allah" has evolved into a nation-polarising matter.

Loh was referring to remarks made by Hishammuddin on Sunday at the Malaysia Student Leaders Summit where he admitted the decision to ban non-Muslims from using "Allah" was regrettable.

"By doing so (rescind the ban), the Home Minister will be respected as a Barisan Nasional leader who looks after the rights and interests of all Malaysians, including protecting the Constitutional rights of minorities," Loh said in a press statement Monday.

Loh, who is also the deputy chairman of MCA Publicity Bureau, said that the restrictions imposed on the terminology should be applied to other religions as well and not just Christians.

"It should be viewed from a Malaysian perspective as Sikhs and Hindus too will be denied their Constitutional rights as there are references of "Allah" in the Guru Granth Sahib of the Sikh and Veda."

"To only allow "Allah" in East Malaysia reeks of 1 country, 2 systems which negates the fact that about 100,000 native Sarawak and Sabah Christians are now based on the Peninsular," he said.

MCA believed that nobody can claim monopoly nor copyright over the word "Allah" which predates Islam and is used by Christians in Muslim majority countries.

PAS, which is governed by a central committee of religious experts, had also taken the stand to allow use of the terminology provided there was no abuse.

"It is only in Umno Islam that Allah cannot be used by non-Muslims," PAS MP for Shah Alam Khalid Samad said.

"Hisham was speaking to a crowd of student leaders of mixed ethnicities. He was trying to play to the gallery. But would he have dared to say the same thing to an Umno crowd," Khalid told Malaysia Chronicle.

The Shah Alam MP was also quoted saying it is pointless to express regret but repentance must be in the form of real action.

He said the mass demonstrations against several worship places had triggered the formation of Perkasa and Hishammudin's decision to ban the word "Allah" had caused serious ramifications.

Meanwhile, DAP stalwart Lim Kit Siang has also urged the Najib administration end the long-drawn dispute over the usage of the word "Allah", a web news portal reported.

Lim was also responding to Hishammuddin's remark on Sunday regretting that his predecessor, Syed Hamid Albar Syed Jaafar, had previously banned the Catholic Church from publishing the word "Allah" to also refer to God for Christians.

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