

**DAP Takes Najib's Brand of "BN Fairness" To Task**  
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Petaling Jaya – DAP MP and National Publicity Secretary, Tony Pua took Prime Minister Najib Razak's avowed claim of religious freedom under Barisan Nasional to task in a media statement today.

He was commenting on the PM's statement guaranteeing fairness and freedom of Malaysians to preach at a function at Subramaniya Swami Devasthanam Temple in conjunction with Thaipusam.

"Najib must be reminded that the practice of religious freedom should not only be skin deep, where celebrations are held in the open but both written and unwritten restrictions are placed on the various religions in the country", Pua's statement said.

The "If Najib truly believe in the "freedom of religion", he must immediately instruct the Home Affairs Minister, Hishamuddin Hussein to retract the Government's appeal against the December 2009 High Court decision to permit the use of the term "Allah" by the non-Muslim community."

Pua suggested Malaysia's draconian laws to be far stricter than that practiced in the Middle East.

"No such rule exists even in the predominantly Muslim Middle East, and history has shown the use of the term for centuries among Christians and Sikhs. However, the Barisan Nasional Government has chosen to unreasonably restrict the religious practices of non-Muslims resulting in the suit filed by the Catholic Church."

He also listed down a number of cases where non-Muslims had to battle government servants who act as the Islamic religious authorities in Malaysia and with lawyers from the Attorney-General's Chambers who argue that they must go to the Syariah court in order to exercise their constitutional rights to raise their children in their own religion.

These have included the cases of Tan Cheow Hong, Indira Gandhi, Nedunchelian, Shamala, and Genga Devi where their family lives totally disrupted when their children were converted to Islam without their knowledge or consent by a disgruntled spouse.

Pua suggested the set-up of an inter-faith panel to openly discuss critical issues affecting religious harmony in the country. He also alleged that the failure of the BN government hold the inter-faith meetings reflects the degree of intolerance among certain religious leaders in Malaysia, including a petty dispute over the name of the sub-committee.

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