

MCA Supports Move By Malaysia, Vatican To Establish Formal Diplomatic Ties
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KUALA LUMPUR -- MCA expressed support for Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak's visit to the Vatican to establish formal diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Party president Dr Chua Soi Lek said with this, any religious misunderstandings involving Christians in this country would be easier to be tackled.

"We cannot deny that the Christian community does face problems just like the Buddhists in this country, but we believe with active engagement by the government, the issues can be resolved," he said after chairing the MCA Central Committee meeting, here, yesterday.

Also present at the news conference was party deputy president Liow Tiong Lai, secretary-general Kong Cho Ha and vice-president Chor Chee Heung.

Dr Chua, however, said that diplomatic relations alone was not enough without the active participation of the government in strengthening inter-faith relations in the country.

He said establishing bilateral relations between Malaysia and the Vatican was also in line with the Global Movement of Moderates proposed by Najib in his speech at the United Nations General Assembly last year, to counter extremism of all forms.

"It's a good start to strengthening relationship between moderate Muslims in the country and people of the Christian faith...it will all go well for the future," he said.

Najib visited Vatican City on Monday and met with Pope Benedict XVI.

It was the second meeting between a Malaysian prime minister and the Pope, after the one involving Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Pope John Paul in June 2002.

Dr Chua also announced the appointment of Federal Territory MCA Youth chief Chiew Lian Keng as senator, replacing Tee Hock Seng whose term ended last Thursday.

(Bernama)

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