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Rulers want immediate end to 'Allah' issue

KUALA LUMPUR: The Malay rulers have taken note of the various requests, letters and memorandums from Muslim organisations and individuals expressing sadness over the translation of the word "God" to "Allah".

A statement, issued by the office of the Keeper of the Rulers' Seal yesterday at the end of the two-day 220th meeting of the Conference of Rulers, said the translation had caused much confusion and dissatisfaction among the people of Malaysia, particularly Muslims.

"This issue, unless resolved immediately, will undermine the sanctity of Islam and, possibly, security and public order as well."

The statement pointed out that Article 3 of the Federal Constitution provided for Islam to be the country's official religion and the Malay rulers to be the heads of religion in the states.

"The Malay rulers have the responsibility to safeguard the sovereignty and sanctity of Islam as the official religion of the country, without neglecting the rights and religious freedom of other races.

"The Malay rulers give the undertaking to fulfil their responsibility to protect the sanctity and status of Islam."

The statement also said that the Malay rulers felt that the incidents of damaging houses of worship were very dangerous acts of provocation which should never be allowed to take place.

"These treacherous acts driven by emotion must be stopped because all religions do not condone but condemn such acts.

Rulers praise police

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"These are criminal acts which should be contained firmly and immediately."

In the statement, the Malay rulers recorded their appreciation of the police for acting professionally to control the situation and maintaining security and public order.

"The Malay rulers well understand the heavy responsibility they (the police) have to face and urge that the efforts of the security forces in maintaining public

order be fully supported."

The statement said the rulers took note that the issue over the use of the word "Allah" by the Catholic weekly magazine, *Herald*, was under consideration by the Court of Appeal.

The 220th meeting, chaired by Sultan of Perak Sultan Azlan Shah, discussed matters related to religion, defence, security and the appointment of judges of the High Court and Court of Appeal as well as members of the Education Service Commission. — Bernama